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# THE ILIAD OF HOMER

DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

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# CONTENTS

## ERRATA.

BOOK XV page 68 line 268	<i>for had read hath.</i>	<i>of the</i>	
„ XVII „ 141 „ 416 „	<i>yearn „ yawn.</i>	...	I
„ „ „ 146 „ 547 „	<i>outstretched read outstretcheth.</i>	<i>Trojans</i>	
		...	35
BOOK XV.—How Zeus turned backward the battle, and Jove was cast on	<i>the galleys</i>	...	57
BOOK XVI.—How Patroclus amidst of his glory was slain of a God and	<i>a Hero...</i>	...	88
BOOK XVII.—How Achaïans and Trojans in darkness fought o'er the	<i>corpse of Patroclus</i>	...	124
BOOK XVIII.—Of the Armour the Fire-god fashioned at Thetis' prayer	<i>for Achilles</i>	...	155





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## CONTENTS

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BOOK XIII.— <i>How stoutly the Danaans rallied with secret help of the Sea-god</i>	... ..	I
BOOK XIV.— <i>How Zeus was beguiled of Hêrê and Sleep, and the Trojans were smitten</i>	... ..	35
BOOK XV.— <i>How Zeus turned backward the battle, and fire was cast on the galleys</i>	... ..	57
BOOK XVI.— <i>How Patroclus amidst of his glory was slain of a God and a Hero...</i>	... ..	88
BOOK XVII.— <i>How Achaïans and Trojans in darkness fought o'er the corpse of Patroclus</i>	... ..	124
BOOK XVIII.— <i>Of the Armour the Fire-god fashioned at Thetis' prayer for Achilles</i>	... ..	155

## CONTENTS

BOOK XIX.—*Achilles the godlike renounceth his wrath, and upriseth to battle* ... .. 181

BOOK XX.—*Of the strife of the Gods, and the battle backward rolled by Achilles* ... .. 199

BOOK XXI.—*Of the River that ran with blood, and the strife of a God with a mortal* ... .. 220

BOOK XXII.—*Of the blood of Patroclus avenged, and Hector slain by Achilles* ... .. 245

BOOK XXIII.—*Of the athlete-strife at the funeral-feast of the dead Patroclus* ... .. 266

BOOK XXIV.—*Of the ransom of Hector, and how they wailed o'er the Tamer of Horses* ... .. 303



# OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON VOLUME I.

## SATURDAY REVIEW.

A translation of the *Iliad* into English verse remains, like the *Quest of the Grail* or the *Fleece of Gold*, an adventure hardly to be achieved. . . . Now, Mr. Way in very many passages does offer us a version at once close, spirited, swift in movement, and simple. We have read much of his translation with great pleasure. . . . If Mr. Way could keep his whole translation on this level, so rapid, distinct, close to Homer, and unaffected, we might look no far her, but declare that the *Quest* was ended, and the *Fleece of Gold* brought home. . . . The merits are such as to place Mr. Way's performance in the front rank of Homeric translations. . . . Mr. Way's version is never bald, frigid, or pompous. In the point of metrical form it has advanced on all its predecessors : his metre comes very near, in length, volume, and movement, to being a genuine English equivalent for the Greek Hexameter.

## ATHENÆUM.

Mr. Way takes a far more important place. He approaches the question as a creator. His translation of the *Odyssey*, which was first published, with needless modesty, under the name of "Avia," introduced a new metre—a rhyming anapaestic hexameter—as the English equivalent of the Homeric line. And this was a contribution of capital importance, which cannot for the future be left out of consideration. For the anapaestic line has the undeniable advantage that it is of native growth, and is adapted to the needs of the language. . . . It is a mistake to suppose that an anapaestic line must of necessity be undignified and sing-song. That depends solely on the writer. We appeal with confidence to Mr. Way's translation :—

"Then shouted the Argives aloud, with a sound as of breakers that roar

When the south wind hurleth the waves on the cliffs of an iron-bound shore,

When the crags of the headland are lashed evermore by the surge mad-leaping

'Neath the scourge of the winds, as from this side and that side their wings come sweeping."

He is a trustworthy scholar ; he has fire and speed enough and to spare. He holds our attention ; we read him for his own sake. If he will but remember that dignity may be lost by excess of vigour—that the most impressive sign of strength is self-control—we shall hope to say some day of the remainder of his *Iliad* that it is the best translation in the English language. . . . We hope he will regard us not as mere critics, but as helpers in his enterprise. . . . A work which we heartily admire.

## OXFORD MAGAZINE.

Mr. Way has accomplished a remarkable feat. A line-for-line translation of the first half of the *Iliad*, rendered with absolute conscientiousness, with scholarlike accuracy, and with unflagging vigour, is a success of which the author may well be proud.

## PALL MALL GAZETTE.

Really a great success. . . . There is a sonorous roll in it, and a variety of pause, a flexibility, a richness, and a dignity about it, that make it approach nearer to the splendid music of the Greek than anything else that has been produced in the same line. The diction, too, of the translation is Homeric, while Pope has smoothed and polished away all character out of his original, and its fidelity is really remarkable.

## WESTMINSTER REVIEW.

It is a pleasure to turn from the consideration of works which, for the most part, are suited only for private circulation, to literary composition of a very high order. In his translation of the *Odyssey*, Mr. Way attained success. . . . As an accurate presentment of the original in a poetical form, which retains not a little of the roll and lilt of the Greek Hexameters, Mr. Way's new translation more than holds its own. . . . We feel confident that this spirited and powerful translation will grow in popularity and favour. Turn wherever we may, we read Mr. Way's verses with a different kind of pleasure from that which is derived from the ordinary run of translators.

## MORNING POST.

Will quite enable those unacquainted with the native Greek to enter into the spirit of the Homeric original. Mr. Way has strictly adhered to the forms of expression made use of by the great old poet. At the same time his English is powerful and melodious, and the archaic terms that he has introduced when modern words failed have been employed with judgment, and will be easily understood by all who read books of this description. It would be unjust to praise one book of this translation more than another. An even level of excellence is maintained throughout. So accurate and forcible is this brilliant version of Homer's poem, that it will not only recommend itself to cultured readers, but it should also tend to popularise the study of the grand Greek poet's entire work.

## BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

A faithful line-for-line rendering of Homer. . . . A swing and energy which leave most translators far behind. A very high level is maintained from first to last in the Iliad, as if the grandeur of the theme, the sense of noble action, had constrained him.

## ACADEMY.

Where the poetry of simple action reaches sublimity, this suits Mr. Way.

## PUBLIC OPINION.

The former translations which Mr. Arthur S. Way issued some time since met with overwhelming cordiality, and this, his latest contribution to literature, is by far the best. So much feeling and earnest passion is thrown into the work that his skill deserves the thanks of every true student. Undoubtedly the efforts of the translator will be highly appreciated, not only for the love he displays for the verses of Homer, but for the soul he throws into his intellectual undertaking.

## ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

The work is well worth attention, if for nothing else, for the spirit with which the translator has kept his pace. He swings along as if he enjoyed it, and carries the reader by the force of his swift movement.

## HARPER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

The general admiration with which Mr. Way's "Odyssey of Homer done into English Verse" was received will certainly be revived by the present work. If the work be calculated to give students of Homer the greatest pleasure, it also deserves, by its original and brilliant qualities, to be esteemed as a great boon by all lovers of fine poetry.

## LITERARY WORLD.

Perhaps the nearest equivalent we can hope for to the strong-winged music of Homer. No merely skilful versifier could produce a work of this kind: it is marked by true poetic gifts. Readers anxious to become acquainted with the greatest of Epics and the poetry of the time when the world was young, will not find themselves deterred by the faults which usually beset translations, and, having taken up this volume, they will not lightly lay it down.

## SCOTSMAN.

An extremely able and scholarly rendering of Homer, and one which preserves a large measure both of the sound and fire of the original. . . . It is not very long since we noticed Mr. Way's scholarly and excellent line-for-line translation of the first six books of the Iliad. . . . We were able to ascribe to this translation a high degree of merit, and the remarks we made then will naturally apply equally well to the portion (vii.—xii.) now before us.

## BOOKSELLER.

Mr. Way loses neither fire nor force as he proceeds with the immortal poem. There are the same grand rolling sentences, in that peculiar metre he so skilfully and effectively employs, the same appreciation of the spirit of the original, and the same closeness to the text, occasionally to the very forms of expression made use of by Homer. Mr. Way, however, neither loses melody by accuracy, nor does he sacrifice accuracy to rhythm. As a poem, his translation is full of simplicity and strength; as a translation, it is one of the most scholarly renderings of the *Iliad* that have appeared in the English tongue.

### NOTES AND QUERIES.

To those who are not pre-occupied with theories on the subject, we willingly commend this new and attractive setting of the Homeric story.

### PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR.

Far above any modern translations which have appeared. As a sustained performance the translation is admirably equal. Throughout the work the stanzas lose none of the Homeric fire which comes to us so clearly in the rare power of the pure Saxon tongue. It is beyond doubt that the latest instalment of Mr. Way's work will be received with applause quite as sincere, as generous, and as well deserved as that which greeted the appearance of previous volumes.

### LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW.

He is unquestionably the most Homeric of English translators since Chapman. With admirable good sense he has selected as his vehicle a long swinging verse of six accents, probably the nearest equivalent to the swiftly-moving various hexameter of Homer which the genius of English versification permits. . . . Spirited and faithful.

### GUARDIAN.

It seems a far cry from Chapman to Mr. Way, and yet we doubt whether the interval offers any version of Homer which is not, by comparison with these, formal and mechanical. . . . This fascinating volume. . . . Abounds in instances of the combination of freedom of expression with essential fidelity to the meaning. . . . has made a distinct contribution to the resources of Homeric translation. . . . He has adopted a metre in which it would, we think, be impossible to maintain a high level of poetry without a poetic gift of his own: Mr. Way's adventure admits of no mean between failure and success. We believe that he has chosen the measure which is best fitted to represent Homer to English readers: but we feel at the same time that it is a veritable bow of Ulysses, which only a master's hand will be able to bend.

### SPECTATOR.

Is already known to fame by an excellent verse translation of the *Odyssey*. His version of the *Iliad*—a harder task unquestionably—is quite as worthy of all commendation. Literal to a degree which no English verse translation, except Professor Newman's, even remotely approaches, it is not less spirited than it is literal. . . . It does challenge comparison with Chapman's famous translation, and if the result of that comparison should prove to be in its favour, to praise it or recommend it would be clearly a work of supererogation. . . . We believe that a full and fair comparison of the two versions would convince even Lamb and Keats, whose names present themselves inevitably here, that in Mr. Way the delightful old fellow who "spake out loud and bold," has found more than his match.

### ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

If we are right in ranking him, as we are inclined to do, as the best of this trio—Chapman, Professor Newman, and Mr. Worsley—there are few lovers of Homer who will not be eager to read him. And Mr. Way deserves to be read. His translation is instinct with that "forcible liveliness," which Mr. H. N. Coleridge notes as the leading characteristic of Homer's poetry. Its terseness, too, and literalness are really wonderful, as they are with such unflagging "go," if we may use that word, and such melodious vivacity. America has sent us a translation of Dante that will bear comparison with the best that we can boast. We are heartily glad to welcome from Australia a translation of Homer of which the same may be said.



## JOHN BULL.

The necessity for obeying Mr. Matthew Arnold's canon that true poetry in one language is only to be rendered by true poetry in another, has won by degrees a yet more hearty recognition in critical circles, and, despite the great and well-merited success of the prose versions of the Iliad and of the Odyssey supplied by Mr. Walter Lang and his colleagues, we may yet turn with a more cordial appreciation to such a rendering as that now under notice . . . . . Complaint has been made in some quarters of what is charged against Mr. Way as an overfondness for compound-words ; but to our mind these compounds add very much to the effect of the translation, and are as a rule thoroughly in harmony with the Greek original. . . . . Many an English student will realise from this version what the gifted young poet felt when he saw the new planet swim into his ken. The radiance of that planet is yet better represented to the English reader by Mr. Way than it was by Chapman, and this, which is the highest tribute of praise that can be accorded to the translator of Homer, is, we cordially and sincerely believe, not too high praise for the translator whose work is before us. . . . . The reader may surrender himself to the full enjoyment of the sonorous verse without that uneasy feeling which so often suggests itself in dealing with a translation which breathes the true spirit of poetry, that the poetical effect of the English has been attained by a sacrifice of fidelity to the original. . . . . We hope that we have said enough to induce all lovers of Homer to search out for themselves the wonderful merits of his latest translator.

THE ILIAD OF HOMER





# THE ILIAD OF HOMER.

## BOOK XIII.

*How stoutly the Danaans rallied with secret help of the Sea-god.*

**N**OW when Zeus to the galleys had brought the Trojans and Hector so,  
He left them to bear their burden of travail, their portion of woe,  
Without respite: howbeit he turned his sunbright eyes from their war,  
On the folk of the Thracians, the land of the battle-steed, gazing afar,  
On the Mysians that close in the fight, and the proud milk-nurtured ones, 5  
Hippomolgians, and Abian men, most righteous of all earth's sons.  
But nowise thereafter his sunbright eyes upon Troy did he bend;  
For it came not into his heart that any Immortal would wend  
To the battle, for help unto Troy, or the Danaans' need to befriend.  
Yet no blind watch was kept of the dark earth-shaking lord; 10  
For he sat and he marvelled the while, as the grappling nations warred,  
Sat on the height of Samos' forest-crownèd head,  
The Thrace-ward isle, whence Ida before him lay outspread,  
And the city of Priam, the galleys Achaian, gleamed in sight,—  
There sat, from the waters uprisen, and pitied Achaia's plight 15

By Troy overborne, and his wrath against Zeus burned grim in his breast.  
 Straightway he hied him adown from the mountain's craggy crest,  
 Swift-speeding his feet, and the far-stretching ridges quaked, and the wood,  
 Beneath his immortal feet, as onward Poseidon strode.

Three strides he made, and the fourth, and lo, to his goal he was come,      20  
 Unto Aigae, where stands in the sea-mere's depths his glorious home,  
 Fashioned unperishing ever, with bright gold-splendour-roofed.  
 There did he yoke to his chariot his horses brazen-hoofed,  
 Swift-flying, with necks overstreamed with stormy golden mane.      [ta'en,  
 And he clad him with gold on his flesh, and the scourge in his hand hath he  
 Fair-fashioned of gold, and on to the floor of his chariot he stept,  
 And over the surges he drave; and before him sporting leapt  
 Sea-beasts that uprose all round from the depths, for their king they knew,  
 And for rapture the sea was disparted, and onward the car-steeds flew  
 Full swiftly, nor wet was the axle of brass with so much as the spray.      30  
 Light-bounding they bare him to where the galleys Achaian lay.

In the fathomless depths of the mere is a cavern, a sea-hall wide,  
 In the midst 'twixt Tenedos' isle and Imbros' rugged side :  
 Even there Poseidon the Shaker of Earth his chariot stayed ;  
 The steeds he unyoked, and ambrosial fodder before them he laid      35  
 For their eating, and fetters of gold about their feet he cast,      [fast  
 Which might not be broken nor loosed, to the end they should bide tethered  
 Till their lord should return : and away to the host of Achaia he passed.

On-thronging as billows of flame, on-bursting as blasts of the storm,  
 After Hector the Priamid furious-fain did the Trojans swarm      40

With yelling and thunder of shouting: they deemed they should take for a prey  
The galleys, and slaughter beside them the best of Achaia's array.

But Poseidon the Shaker of Earth rose up from the depths of the brine,  
And the Girder of Lands 'gan rally the Argive battle-line ;  
For with Kalchas' unwearying voice he spake, and his likeness he bore : 45  
To the two Aiantes he cried, which were battle-eager before :

“Aiantes, 'tis ye shall deliver the men of Achaia's array,  
If ye think of your prowess, and not of palsy-numbed dismay.  
Otherwhere the resistless hands of the Trojans I fear not at all,  
Albeit their battle-throng hath scaled our mighty wall ; 50  
For the goodly-harnessed Achaians the shock of them all shall abide :  
But in one place sorely I fear lest haply mischief betide,  
Even there where the murder-frenzied as ravening flame leadeth on,  
Even Hector, who vaunteth him Zeus the Mighty Father's son.  
But for you—may one of the Deathless fill your spirit with might 55  
Stoutly to bide the brunt, and to cheer the rest to the fight.

Then in mid fury of onset, I trow, should ye bar his path  
To the swift ships, though the Olympian himself be enkindling his wrath.”

He spake, and the Earth-enfolder, the Shaker of the Land,  
Smote into them mighty strength at the touch of his sceptre-wand, 60  
And lightsome he made their feet, and their toil-heavy hands grew light :  
But himself as a hawk sudden-darting away in swift-winged flight—  
Which down from a crag unfooted, a measureless-high rock, stooping,  
Rusheth across the plain, on the weak-winged quarry swooping,—  
So darting from these was the Shaker of Earth Poseidon gone. 65

Then first to Oileus' son, swift Aias, the godhead was known ;  
And he spake forthright unto Aias the giant, Telamon's son :

“ Aias, 'tis one of the Gods which abide on Olympus' height  
That in shape of the prophet commandeth that here by the galleys we fight.  
Of a truth no Kalchas is this, no bird-seer taught by a God, 70  
For I followed the gleam of his ankles, the flash of his feet as they trod  
When he turned him away :—the signs of a God no man may mistake.  
Yea, and within this breast of mine is my spirit awake,  
And it yearneth for fight, and battleward straineth yet more than before.  
In my feet is the fury of onset, mine hands are afire for the war.” 75

Then Aias made answer to him, and the son of Telamon spake :  
“ Yea, likewise around my spear with the fever of battle shake  
My resistless hands, and my might is uproused : I am hurried on  
By the spirit that stirs in my feet : I am fain, even I alone,  
To face the onset-fury of Hector, Priam's son.” 80

In such wise each unto other spake those heroes, filled  
With the rapture of battle, wherewith the God their hearts hath thrilled ;  
The while Earth-girder to rearward was kindling Achaia's array  
Who amidst of their sea-swift ships drew breath from the toil of the fray.  
Outworn were their fainting sinews with battle's grievous stress, 85  
And with anguish their spirits were darkened whenso they looked on the press  
Of the Trojans, as stormed their battle-throng over the mighty wall :  
And for rage and for grief, as they gazed, from their eyes the tears 'gan fall.  
For they deemed they should never escape from destruction : passed Earth-shaker  
Through the strong battalions, and lightly he rallied the Argive men. [then



Unto Teucer and Lêtus came he, and roused them to turn on their foes ;  
 To Dêipyros, Thoas, he came, and to hero Pêneléôs :  
 And Mêriones and Antilochus, kindlers of onset, he stirred.  
 Cheering them on to the battle he loosed the swift-winged word :

“ Shame, Argives, ye strong young princes!—what, have I trusted in vain 95  
 That battling ye should deliver these our galleys from bane ?  
 If backward ye shrink from the bitter war, I foretell to you now  
 That the day hath arisen when 'neath the hands of your foes ye shall bow.  
 Ha, 'tis a marvel of marvels that here with mine eyes I behold,  
 'Tis a horror whereof I had thought the fulfilment should never be told, 100  
 That the Trojans should come to our galleys,—they that in days overpast  
 Were even as stags through the ways of the woodland fleeing fast  
 Till they fall terror-blinded to jackals and panthers and wolves a prey,  
 As helpless and strengthless they wander, and have no heart for the fray ;  
 Even so in the days of old dared never the Trojans stand, 105  
 No, not for an instant, before Achaia's mighty hand ;  
 But now by the hollow galleys they fight from the city afar,  
 Through a chieftain's folly of soul, through a people's slackness in war,  
 A folk that by reason of feud with their lord will nowise abide  
 To defend the ships, but endure to be slaughtered therebeside ! 110  
 Nay, what though the man that is guilty hereof be in very deed  
 Agamemnon the wide-dominioned, Atreus' hero-seed,  
 Forasmuch as to Peleus' fleetfoot son he hath done despite ?  
 For this shall we shrink from the battle, for this be craven in fight ?  
 Nay, haste we rather to heal—there is balm for the hearts of the bold. 115

Not for your honour is this, that your onset-fire is acold,  
And ye the mightiest ones of our host!—it is not I  
Would upbraid what man soever aback from the battle should fly,  
So the wight were a weakling: but ye—from my very soul am I wroth.  
O cravens, full soon shall an evil yet sorer be wrought by your sloth! 120  
Nay then, let shame have birth in the spirit of every one,  
And indignation, for surely a mighty strife is begun.

Lo, Hector the stalwart, the battle-helper, hath rolled the war  
To the ships, and hath rifted asunder the gates and the giant bar!"  
So cheered them the Earth-enfolder, and kindled the battle-mood; 125  
And around the Aiantes twain strong-massed the battalions stood.  
Not Arès' self, had he passed thereby, had contemned them then,  
Nor Athènè the Battle-aid, for their chosen, their mightiest men,  
Stood firm against Hector the godlike, and bode the Trojans' charge,  
With the hedge of their spears dense-bristling, with serried targe by targe. 130  
Shield pressed upon shield, and helmet on helmet, and man on man,  
And the morion-ridges touched as the wavering lightning ran  
From helm unto nodding helm, so densely thronged stood they.  
And the spears that in strong hands quivered were crossed in a tangled array;  
And their spirits were fain of the onset, their hearts were afire for the fray.

But forward the Trojans hurled in a dense throng: Hector led  
Storming afront, from the brow of a cliff as a boulder is sped,  
Which the thrust of a wintertide torrent adown from the crest hath rolled  
When the measureless rains have rifted the monstrous crag's earth-hold:  
Bounding on high it is flying, and crasheth before that stone 140

The copsewood, as ever resistless it rusheth, until it hath won  
 To the plain, but its fury thereafter no whit may roll it on :  
 Even so threatened Hector awhile full lightly to cleave his way  
 To the sea, and to win to the tents and the ships of Achaia's array,  
 Slaying : but when those close-embattled ranks he met 145  
 He was stayed : and Achaia's sons against him steadfast-set,  
 With battle-brands swinging and spears two-headed thrusting fierce,  
 Bare him aback, and he staggered and reeled from the hedge of the spears ;  
 And he cried, and the shout of him high o'er the roar of the battle rose :  
 " Trojans and Lycians and Dardans in grapple of onset who close, 150  
 Abide ye !—not long the Achaians before my fury shall stand,  
 Not though like a tower they have set in array their warrior-band !  
 They shall flinch from my spear, if in truth I am spurred on victory-ward  
 By the chief of the Gods, by Hère's mighty-thundering Lord !"

He spake, and he kindled their spirit, the soul of each man glowed ; 155  
 And amidst them Dêphobus onward with heart uplifted strode,  
 A Priamid, warily holding his shapely shield before,  
 Light-speeding his feet, with his limbs by the fence of the targe covered o'er.  
 Then aimed at him Mériones his javelin glittering bright, [160  
 And he hurled, and he missed not, but fair on the shapely shield did it light ;  
 Yet it cleft not the bull's hide buckler, but long ere that might be  
 At the socket the long shaft snapped, and Dêphobus heedfully  
 Outstretched from his body the bull's hide shield, for his soul was adread  
 Of the spear of the war-wise Mériones : but the hero hath sped  
 Back into the throng of his war-fellows, chafing in wrathful pain 165

Alike for the victory lost and the good spear shivered in twain.  
And away to the tents and the galleys Achaian in haste he went  
To get him a lance long-shafted, the which he had left in his tent.  
But ever the rest fought on, and arose the unquenchable yell.  
By the hand of Teucer Telamon's son the first foe fell, 170  
Imbrius, son unto Mentor, a lord steed-wealthy was he :  
In Pedaion he dwelt ere the sons of Achaia came oversea ;  
And Mêdisekastê, Priam's bastard child, was his bride :  
But when came the Danaan's wave-rocked galleys over the tide,  
He returned unto Troy, and was great mid the Trojan mighty ones, 175  
And with Priam abode, and the old king honoured him like to his sons.  
But the lance at his neck 'neath the ear did the son of Telamon dash,  
And plucked the long shaft back : then fell he, as falleth an ash,  
Whose trunk on the crest of a hill far-seen o'er the lealand around  
Hath been hewn by the axe till it boweth its tender leaves to the ground ; 180  
So fell he, and crashed around him his war-gear brass-bedight.  
Then rushed on him Teucer, eager to strip his harness of fight ;  
And Hector hurled at him, even as he rushed, with his glittering lance,  
But he swerved from its lightning leap, for he marked it with wary glance.  
Scantly he 'scaped ; but the lance to Amphimachus' heart hath gone, 185  
As battlement turned him the scion of Kteatus, Aktor's son :  
And he fell with a crash, and clanged above him his battle-gear.  
Then Hector rushed on Amphimachus mighty-hearted, to tear  
From the head of the slain the helm close-lapping his temples about :  
But Aias, as Hector rushed, with his glittering spear thrust out, 190



Yet he touched not his flesh, for that sheathed in terrible brass he was  
 From head to foot ; howbeit he drave at his buckler's boss, [slain :  
 And with giant strength did he thrust him, that backward he reeled from the  
 And the sons of Achaia drew from the midst those corpses twain.  
 Menestheus the godlike and Stichius, captains of Athens' array, 195  
 Haled to the host of Achaia Amphimachus' body away,  
 And on Imbrius seized the Aiantes, afire with the wrath of the fray.  
 And as when from the sharp-fanged hounds two lions have snatched the prey,  
 A goat, and through tangled thickets bearing the quarry they bound,  
 In their strong jaws holding it high uplifted above the ground ; 200  
 So him high lifted the warriors twain, the Aiantes, bore,  
 And spoiled of his battle-gear, and the son of Oileus shore  
 His head from his tender neck, in his wrath for Amphimachus dead,  
 And he tossed it, that ball-wise rolling athwart the rout it was sped,  
 And in front of the feet of Hector fell in the dust that head. 205  
 Ha, then was Poseidon's wrath enkindled, his heart was aglow  
 For his son's son's sake, in the midst of the terrible fight laid low.  
 On to the tents and the galleys Achaian his way hath he ta'en,  
 Rousing the Danaan fury, working the Trojans' bane.  
 And there on Idomeneus spear-renowned did the Sea-god light 210  
 From his comrade returning, the friend who but now had come forth of the fight  
 Hurt with the keen-whetted brass in the knee, and in evil plight.  
 Of his friends was he borne, and the king to the leeches had given his hest,  
 And now to his tent would he fare, for his heart still battleward pressed.  
 Then stood before him the Lord of the Sea, and the Earth-shaker spake, 215

And the voice of Andraimon's son, of Thoas the swift, did he take,  
The man that through all wide Pleuron and Kalydon's steeps bare sway  
O'er Aetolia's folk, and was revered like to a God alway :

"Idomeneus, counsel-chief of the Cretans, where be now  
Thy threats against Troy, and where the Achaïans' vengeance-vow?" 220

And the Lord of the Cretans replied, and answer Idomeneus made :  
"There is no man, Thoas, on whom the blame of this shall be laid,  
That I wot of; for all we have in the battle warrior-skill,  
Nor hath craven fear laid hold upon any; for slackness of will  
Not a man draweth back from the bitter battle: nay, but I wis 225  
The pleasure of him that excelleth in strength, of Kronion, is this,  
That nameless and fameless from Argos afar the Achaïans should die.  
But, Thoas, a battle-bider art thou from the days gone by,  
And thou heartenest whomso thou seest from war-toil shrinking away;  
Wherefore forbear not now, but cheer on all to the fray." 230

Then Earth-shaker answered, and grim was the voice of Poseidon and stern:  
"Idomeneus, never may that man look on his home-return  
From Troy, but to dogs let him here be a ravin-joy and a prey,  
Whosoe'er shall be wilful-craven, to shrink from the fight this day.  
Now get thee thy weapons and come, spare not to array thee with speed; 235  
If haply, albeit but twain, we may help the Achaïans' need.  
When the valiant be with him, the veriest weakling will play his part;  
But we—we have learned to grapple with heroes dauntless of heart."

So answered the God, and back to the war-toil of heroes he went.  
And so soon as Idomeneus came to his goodly-fashioned tent, 240

His beautiful harness he donned, in his grip two lances shone,  
 And he went, and he seemed as the lightning-flash which Kronos' son  
 Hath grasped in his hand, and hath shaken from shining Olympus afar  
 For a sign unto mortals, and world-beholden the beams of it are ;  
 So flashed as he ran the brass that encompassed his breast about. 245

Now meeteth him Mêriones, his henchman valiant and stout,  
 While yet he was nigh to his tent, as in haste that warrior hied  
 For a brazen spear, and to him the might of Idomeneus cried :

“ O Mêriones, fleet scion of Molus, best-loved friend,  
 Why hast thou left the war and the battle, and hither dost wend ? 250  
 Art thou dart-stricken, friend, that the point of the shaft maketh faint thy might?  
 Or for me art thou come with a message ?—it needs not : little delight,  
 Good sooth, have I in my tent to be sitting : I long for the fight.”

Spake Mêriones unto him, and answer the wise-heart made :  
 “ Idomeneus, counsellor-chief of the Cretans brass-arrayed, 255  
 For a spear, if perchance there be found with thee any, I fare from the field ;  
 For behold, I have shivered the shaft that aforetime I wont to wield,  
 On Dêrphobus' buckler I dashed it, the haughty warrior's shield.”

But Idomeneus lord of the Cretans answered, and thus spake he :  
 “ Spears shalt thou find, an thou wilt : there is one, ay, twenty there be 260  
 Against my pavilion's sunlit sides all standing arow :  
 Trojan they be, the which I have torn from their slain, for I trow  
 I use not to stand in the day of the battle afar from the foe.  
 Wherefore I lack not lances, and bucklers boss-bedight,  
 Helmets withal, and store of corslets flashing bright.” 265

Spake Mèriones unto him, and the wise-heart made reply :  
“ Yea also beside my tent and my dark-hulled galley have I  
Spoils of the Trojan men, but none be at hand for my need.  
For, I tell thee, I also forget not the spirit of fight and the deed,  
But aye in the forefront of glory-wafting battle I stand, 270  
Whensoever uproused is the war, when the flame of its fury is fanned.  
Nay, haply other Achaïans brazen-arrayed have seen  
Naught of my prowess, but thou needest not to be told, I ween.”

And Idomeneus answered, and spake the lord of the Cretan host :  
“ I know what valour is thine : what boots it thus to boast ? 275  
For if now by the ships they were choosing our mightiest, our men of renown,  
For an ambush, wherein most chiefly the valour of heroes is known,  
Where the craven cannot be hid, and the dauntless heart is shown,—  
For the hue of the face of the dastard is changing and changing aye,  
And his spirit may nowise be curbed in his breast unquaking to stay, 280  
But ever he shifteth his knees, and he resteth on both of his feet,  
And ever against his ribs full loud doth the heart of him beat,  
Foreboding his doom, and a chattering sound of his teeth is heard :  
But the brave man's hue is unchanged ; he is nowise panic-stirred  
When once he hath crouched in the ambush of heroes to wait for his foes, 285  
But he prayeth in battle bitter and stern with speed to close :— [mistrust,  
There none should make light of thine hands, and thy might no man should  
For though in the battle-toil thou wert smitten with dart or with thrust,  
That shaft should not leap to thy neck or thy back from behind as in flight,  
Nay, fairly and full on thy breast or the belly of thee should it light 290



As onward thou rushedst to where the ranks of the forefighters clash :—  
 Come, talk we in this wise no longer, as children babbling rash,  
 Neither loiter, lest haply a man should have great indignation to hear :  
 But get thee unto my tent, and take thee a mighty spear.”

Then Mêriones the peer of the fleetfoot God of War 295  
 Hasted, and forth of the tent a brazen spear he bore ;  
 And full of the lust of the fight he followed Idomeneus then.  
 And as entereth into the battle Arês destroyer of men,  
 And behind him his dear son Panic, the stalwart, the aweless-bold,  
 Goeth, who daunteth the hero, though never so steadfast-souled,— 300  
 From Thrace in their harness they fare to the Ephyran war-array,  
 Or the Phlegyans mighty of heart ; yet nowise hearken they  
 Unto both, but to these or to those, as they list, give victory-fame ;  
 So Mêriones and Idomeneus, captains of warfolk, came  
 Faring to battle arrayed in brass that flamelike burned. 305  
 Then first spake Mêriones, as unto the king he turned :

“ Where wilt thou, Deukalion’s son, that we enter the press of the fight ?  
 Shall it be at the midst of the host ?—shall it be on the uttermost right ?  
 Or say, shall it be on the left ?—for I deem no otherwhere  
 Is the battle so sore on the men of Achaia with long-flowing hair.” 310

And Idomeneus answered, the lord of the Cretans spake to his friend :  
 “ Others beside us there be the midmost ships to defend,  
 The Aiantes twain, and Teucer the best of Achaia-land  
 With the bow, yea, good at need where men in the close fight stand.  
 With buffets enow shall they greet him, shall quench the battle-glee 315

Of Hector the son of Priam, how stalwart soever he be.  
Hard task shall it be for him there, though he lust for the fight full sore,  
To overcome their might, and the hands resistless in war,  
And to fire the galleys, except Kronion's own right hand  
Hurl on the sea-swift ships a blazing levin-brand. 320  
But for man—Telamonian Aias would flinch for no man born,  
No man that was mortal, and ate of the gifts of the Lady of Corn,  
And whose flesh might be cleft with the brass and with massy rock-shards torn.  
Nay, not rank-rifting Achilles himself would Aias fear  
In the standing fight : but in fleetness Achilles hath no peer. 325  
Now guide thou us thither to left of the host, that with speed we may know  
If renown shall be given by a foeman to us, or by us to a foe."

So spake he, and Mēriones swift Arēs' battle-peer led  
On, till they came to the war-host, even as the king had said.  
On Idomeneus looked they, and saw a man all flame draw near, 330  
Even him and his henchman, arrayed in their rich-wrought battle-gear ;  
Roared through the press their cheers, and they charged on him all as one,  
And a grimmer and deadlier strife by the sterns of the ships was begun.  
As when driven by whistling winds the blasts wild-eddying race  
On a day when the dust is exceeding deep on the summer ways, 335  
And the air is a whirling confusion and dim as the sea-born haze,  
Even so was their closing in battle, and fain in their spirits were they  
With the keen-whetted brass in the war-press to smite each other and slay :  
And bristled the battle, devourer of men, with the lances keen,  
Long-shafted cleavers of flesh, which they grasped, and the blinding sheen 340

Of the brass ever dazzled their eyes, from the flaming helms as it streamed,  
 As from corslets freshly-burnished and flashing bucklers it gleamed,  
 As the ranks of them hurled together. Full hardy of heart should he be  
 Who would joy to behold that labour of battle, nor shudder to see !

So there with purpose contending Kronos' two strong sons 345  
 Were fashioning grievous woes for the earth-born mighty ones.  
 For the Trojans and Hector was Zeus devising the victory still,  
 Giving glory to fleetfoot Achilles : howbeit it was not his will  
 That wholly the nation Achaian should perish before Troy-town ;  
 But for honour of Thetis he wrought for her strong-souled son's renown. 350  
 And amidst of the Argives Poseidon passed, and their might he awoke,  
 From the grey sea risen unseen, for he chafed to behold the folk  
 Overborne by the Trojans : at Zeus was his indignation aflame.  
 Sooth, one was the lineage of both, and their fatherland-home the same ;  
 But Zeus was the elder-born, and the mightier in wisdom's might. 355  
 Wherefore Poseidon shrank, that he rendered not help in his sight ;  
 But in secret guise as a man did he hearten their fainting array :  
 And the cords of the giant strife and the level-balanced fray,  
 'Twixt God and God strained hard, high over the war-hosts hung ;  
 Snap them might none, neither loose them, and many a knee they unstrung. 360

Then, silvery-grey though his hair, on-cheering the Danaan folk  
 Mid the Trojans Idomeneus leapt, and with panic their ranks he broke.  
 For Othryoneus of Kabêsus, who sojourned in Ilium-town,  
 He slew :—but of late had he come for the winning of war-renown ;  
 And Cassandra, of Priam's daughters the fairest to see, would he wed. 365

Neither proffered a bride-price, but promised a mighty deed in its stead,  
To drive the sons of Achaia from Troy in their own despite.  
Wherefore the old man Priam consented with covenant-plight  
To give her, and putting his trust in the pledge to the war he came.  
But against him Idomeneus pointed the javelin's gleaming flame, 370  
And he hurled, and he smote him as proudly he strode, and his corslet of brass  
Availed not, but on through the midst of his bowels did the spear-head pass.  
Down-crashing he fell: then vaunted the hero above him and cried:

"Othryoneus, I praise thee above all mortals beside,  
If thou shalt accomplish all thy promise in very deed 375  
Unto Priam Dardanus' son, who pledged thee his child for thy meed!  
Sooth, we would promise as much, and fulfil the same unto thee,  
And would give of the daughters of Atreus' son the fairest to see, [fight,  
And from Argos would bring her to wed thee, if thou in our quarrel wouldst  
And wouldst rase yon city of Priam, the fortress stately-pight. 380  
Nay, follow, that so by the sea-swift ships we may plight with thee  
The marriage-troth;—not greedy of bride-price gifts are we!"

Then hero Idomeneus seized him, and haled through the mighty fray  
By the foot—lo, Asius cometh to rend from the spoiler the prey.  
In front of his horses he stood, and these did his henchman rein, 385  
That still on his shoulders they breathed, and his soul was exceeding fain  
To hurl to Idomeneus' heart: but the lance of the hero first  
Leapt to his throat 'neath the chin, and clear through the neck it burst.  
Down fell he, as when some oak or poplar down doth fall,  
Or as when mid the mountains the craftsmen have hewn a pine-tree tall 390



With axes newly whetted, to build them a galley withal ;  
 So stretched in front of his steeds and his car lay Asius low  
 Groaning, and clutching the bloody dust in his agony-throe.  
 And aghast was his charioteer, and failed him utterly  
 The cunning of old, and he dared not wheel his horses to flee 395  
 From the hands of the foe. Then battle-bider Antilochus cast  
 Through the midst of his body his spear: through the corslet of brass it passed,  
 For naught it availed, but amidst of his belly the spear-head stood ;  
 And gasping to earth from the car fair-fashioned he fell in his blood.  
 And Antilochus, scion of great-heart Nestor, drave the car 400  
 From the Trojans forth to the fair-greaved Danaan host of war.  
 Unto Idomeneus then Dêrphobus drew full near  
 Chafing for Asius slain, and he hurled with his gleaming spear.  
 But its onrush Idomeneus shunned with wary forward glance,  
 For he hid him behind his shapely-rounded shield from the lance, 405  
 The targe that he bare, with the ox-hide covered in fold on fold,  
 And with flamelike brass, with its arm-rods twain for the warrior's hold.  
 Thereunder he crouched all-hidden : the lance flew onward above :  
 Sharp rang the shield as the javelin glanced from the face thereof.  
 Yet Dêrphobus' brawny hand sped it not on a bootless flight, 410  
 But on Hippiasus' son, Hypsênor, a shepherd of folk, did it light,  
 In his liver the midriff beneath, and it palsied his knees forthright.  
 Then Dêrphobus vaunted with terrible cry ringing far through the fight :  
 " Ha, verily not unavenged lieth Asius ; nay, but I say  
 That, albeit to Hades the strong Gate-warder he wendeth to-day, 415

He shall joy in his heart :—I have sent him an escort now for the way!"

So spake he, and anguish came on the Argives because of his vaunt,  
And war-wise Antilochus' spirit was kindled the most by his taunt.  
Yet not for his anguish of soul forgot he his friend laid low, [420  
But he ran and bestrode him, and o'er him the fence of his shield did he throw.  
And trusty comrades twain uplifted the stricken one,  
For Alastor the godlike came, and Mekisteus, Echiüs' son,  
And unto the hollow galleys they bare him, sighing sore.  
But Idomeneus reined not his mighty strength, but was fain evermore  
Or to shroud some Trojan yet in the death-night's blackness of gloom, 425  
Or himself to fall in defending the men of Achaia from doom.  
Now Aisûêtes the princely had there a beloved son,  
Alkathoüs the hero—Anchises' child for his bride had he won,  
Hippodameia; the eldest-born of his daughters was she,  
And her sire and the lady her mother loved her exceedingly 430  
In their halls, for that still she outshone all maids her companions in pride  
Of beauty, and loomwork, and wisdom of spirit: wherefore the bride  
She became of the noblest man in all Troy's compass wide.  
But Poseidon delivered him into the hand of Idomeneus there,  
For he dazed his flashing eyes, and his glorious limbs did he snare; 435  
For he could not swerve from his path, and he could not turn him and flee;  
But, even as standeth a pillar or lofty leaf-crowned tree,  
Unstirring he stood, till the spear of the hero Idomeneus smote  
Full in the midst of his breast, and cleft his brazen coat,  
The corslet that shielded his breast from destruction theretofore; 440

Then harshly it rang as the shattering spear through the midst of it tore,  
 Down-crashing he fell, and the spear stood planted deep in his heart,  
 While shook with its shuddering throbs the long shaft's hinder part :  
 And there was its fury spent by the stormy Lord of War.

And Idomeneus vaunted with terrible voice through the fight ringing far : 445

“ Dêiphobus, what, shall we deem that worthy requital is paid  
 In that two for thy one we have slain ?—What now of the boast thou hast made,  
 Fair sir ?—Come also thou, and stand thou against me, and so  
 What manner of child of Zeus is hitherward come shalt thou know :  
 For first he begat the warder of Crete, even Minos the King ; 450  
 And from Minos' loins did a son, Deukalion the princely, spring ;  
 And me did Deukalion beget over nations to stretch my sway  
 In wide Crete : now in the ships have I tracked the printless way  
 For a bane to thy sire and to thee, and to all the Trojan array !”

He spake, and the mind of Dêiphobus wavered to and fro 455  
 Or backward to turn, and to find for his help against the foe  
 Some great-heart Trojan, or even to try the battle alone.

And thus, in the thoughts of his heart, him seemed it were best to be done,  
 For Aeneas to go : and behold, he found him loitering  
 On the skirts of the battle, for aye was he wroth with Priam the King, 460  
 For that brave though he was among men he gave him not honour due.  
 So he came to his side, from his eager lips as the winged words flew :

“ Aeneas, counsellor-chief of the Trojans, 'twere meet and right  
 That thou rescue thy sister's lord, if thou carest at all for his plight.  
 Nay, come for Alkathôüs helping, who fostered in days gone by 465

For thy sister's sake in his halls thine helpless infancy :  
Lo, slain by the hand of Idomeneus spear-renowned doth he lie."

He spake, and Aeneas was kindled in spirit to hear that word,  
And to meet Idomeneus fared with the battle-mood mightily stirred.  
But not as a tender boy was Idomeneus seized with affright : 470  
He abode them like to a boar on the mountains in pride of his might,  
Which abideth the throng of the hunters when many a man draweth nigh,  
In a lonely place, and the ridge of his bristles he setteth high,  
And the eyes of him glitter with fire, and he whetteth his tusks for the fray  
Mad-eager to hold the throng of the hounds and the hunters at bay : 475  
So bode Idomeneus spear-renowned, and he shrank not aside  
As Aeneas came on to the rescue, but loud to his comrades he cried.  
To Askalaphus, Aphareus, looked he, Dêipyros too, through the rout,  
And to Mêriones and Antilochus, wakers of onset-shout ;  
And he roused to the rescue the heroes with swift-winged words, and he said :

" Ho, come to mine help, friends !—I am alone, and sorely I dread  
The onrush of fleetfoot Aeneas, who cometh against me now :  
He is passing strong for the slaughter of heroes in battle, I trow ;  
And the mightiest vantage of all, the flower of manhood, hath he.  
But if holpen of youth like his this spirit of mine might be, 485  
Soon would I try if the triumph should fall unto him or to me !"

So spake he, and all they bearing within their hearts one mood  
Drew nigh unto him, and with bucklers aslope on their shoulders they stood.  
And Aeneas beheld, and he cried to his friends through the battle-throng ;  
To Dêiphobus, Paris, he looked, and Agênor the godlike-strong, 490



Which were chiefs of the host with himself ; and their warrior-company  
Followed after their lords, as when the sheep from the pasture-lea  
Follow the ram to the water, and glad is the shepherd to see :  
Even so that day rejoiced the heart in Aeneas' breast  
When he saw how the host of the heroes to battle behind him pressed. 495  
So around Alkathous these to the grapple of close fight dashed  
With the spears long-shafted : about the breasts of them terribly clashed  
The brass, as they hurled at each other the darts mid the battle-rout.  
And chiefly above the rest two heroes valiant and stout,  
Aeneas, Idomeneus, they, the War-god's battle-peers, 500  
Were striving to cleave each other's flesh with the ruthless spears.  
Then first did Aeneas against Idomeneus hurl his lance,  
But he shunned that brazen spear with wary forward glance ;  
And the lance of Aeneas quivering into the earth plunged deep,  
Forasmuch as on bootless flight from his brawny hand did it leap. 505  
Then Idomeneus' spear to the midst of Oinomaüs' belly flew,  
And it shivered his corslet's hollow : his bowels the brass forth drew.  
Down falling in dust the earth in his agony-clutch hath he ta'en.  
And the lance long-shafted Idomeneus plucked from the flesh of the slain.  
Yet he might not prevail to strip the fair war-gear of the dead 510  
From his shoulders, for now with the darts thick-haired was he sorely bestead.  
For no more were his feet firm-knit in the onrush of battle to go,  
Or to follow the leap of his lance, or to swerve from the dart of a foe :  
Wherefore in standing fight he withstood the pitiless day,  
But his feet not swiftly would bear him to flee from the midst of the fray. 515

And, as slowly the king gave ground, Dêiphobus hurled at him  
With his bright spear, nursing against him a wrath abiding and grim.  
Howbeit he missed then too, but the lance to Askalaphus sped,  
The War-god's scion, and burst through his shoulder the fierce spear-head ;  
And he fell in the dust, and the earth in his agony-clutch he caught. 520  
Howbeit not yet wild Arês the thunder-voiced knew aught  
Of his dear son, how he was fallen amidst of the desperate fight,  
But pavilioned in golden cloud on Olympus' topmost height  
He sat, by the counsels of Zeus restrained, even there where the rest  
Of the deathless Gods were pent, that not to the battle they pressed. 525  
So around Askalaphus these rushed on to the grapple of fight ;  
And Dêiphobus tore from Askalaphus' head his morion bright :  
Then leapt on him Mêriones, swift Arês' battle-peer,  
And amidst of the arm he smote him, and fell at the thrill of the spear  
From his hand that visored helmet clanging adown on the plain. 530  
With a leap like a vulture's swoop rushed Mêriones again  
And out of the arm by the shoulder that terrible spear he tare,  
And drew back to the throng of his friends : forthright was Politês there,  
His brother, and round Dêiphobus' waist his arm hath he cast,  
And led from the fight wild-yelling, until they were come at the last 535  
Unto where his steeds, to the rearward of all the fight and the war,  
Stood with their charioteer and the cunningly-fashioned car.  
And their wounded lord to the city full heavily groaning they bore,  
Fainting, and down from his arm fresh-wounded was streaming the gore.  
But the rest of them fought on ever, the war-cry quenchless rang. 540

Then upon Aphareus son of Kalêtor Aeneas sprang :  
 On his throat, as a moment it faced him, his keen-whetted spear hath he dashed :  
 Then sideways drooped his head, and above him his buckler clashed  
 And his helmet ; and over him death the devourer of souls was shed.  
 But Antilochus keen-watched Thoön, and even as he turned his head 545  
 Leapt on him, and stabbed, and all that long-upwelling vein,  
 From the back to the neck that goeth, the lance-head shore in twain,  
 Utterly cleft it in twain : on his back in the dust he fell,  
 In his agony stretching his hands to the friends that loved him well.  
 And Antilochus rushed, and his harness of fight from his shoulders he won, 550  
 Swift-glancing around, for the Trojans on this side and that pressed on,  
 And they thrust at his broad shield flashing bright, but they might not prevail  
 To gash with the pitiless brass his flesh through the fence of the mail  
 Of Antilochus, seeing Earth-shaker Poseidon's encompassing power  
 Saved Nestor's son, how thick soever the javelin-shower. 555  
 Good sooth, foes had he enow, but ever he faced them at bay :  
 Never his lance unquivering rested, but ever and aye  
 Flickered its leaping lightning : his purpose was still with the spear  
 To smite some foe with a cast from afar, or a thrust from anear.  
 But Adamas, Asius' son, through the war-press marked him wield 560  
 That lance, and he drave with the keen-whetted brass at the midst of his shield,  
 With a rush as he reached him : howbeit Poseidon the raven-haired  
 Made vain the spear of the smiter, for still for his life he cared.  
 And the half of the shaft abode, like the stock of a tree charred round,  
 In Antilochus' shield, while lay the half thereof on the ground. 565

Then aback to the throng of his war-fellows shrinking from doom he drew ;  
But Mèriones followed after his flight, and his javelin flew ;  
'Twixt the groin and the navel it lighted, the spot where chiefly of all  
Upon wretched mortals the War-god's strokes most bitterly fall.  
There stood in his body the spear, and falling impaled yet alive 570  
Writhed he as struggleth an ox on the hills, which the herdmen drive  
Exceeding loth by force, having bound it with many a thong,  
So smitten he writhed for a little season, but nowise long,  
Till the hero Mèriones drew nigh, and the shaft of doom  
Plucked from his flesh: then veiled were his eyes with death's deep gloom. 575  
With Dèïpyrus Helenus closed, and with mighty Tracian glaive  
Smote on his temple, and clear from his head his morion clave.  
Dashed from his brows to the earth it fell, and, even as it rolled  
'Twixt the feet of the fighters, a warrior Achaian thereon laid hold ;  
And the eyes of him there did the shroud of the blackness of night enfold. 580  
Came anguish on Menelaus the battle-helper then ;  
And he fared to defy the hero Helenus, king among men,  
Shaking his spear ; but the midst of his bow the foe 'gan strain.  
At the selfsame moment the one with the lance keen-whetted was fain  
To hurl, and the other was drawing the shaft on the string to the head. 585  
Then Priam's son to his corslet's hollow the winged dart sped,  
But glancing afar from his breast the bitter arrow fled.  
And as when from the broad-faced shovel on some great floor swift leap  
The dark-skinned beans or the rattling pulse from the minishing heap,  
Before the rush of the whistling wind and the fan's long sweep ; 590



Even so from the breastplate of lord Menelaus the glorious in war  
With a great leap glancing away the bitter shaft flew far.  
Then battle-helper Atreides, the lord Menelaus, cast  
At the hand that was grasping the polished bow, and the spear-point passed  
Into the centre-piece of the bow, cutting clear through the hand. 595  
Then shrinking from doom fled Helenus back to his comrade-band,  
Drooping his hand ; for the ashen spear-shaft trailed on the ground.  
But Agênor the great-heart drew the spear-head forth, and he bound  
That stricken hand with wool, with the deftly-twisted cord  
Of a sling, which a henchman bore for the shepherd of folk, his lord. 600

Against war-renowned Menelaus straight onward Peisander is gone,  
For the evil doom of death to his ending draweth him on  
By thine hand, O Menelaus, in terrible strife to die.  
So when, as they charged on each other, by this they were drawn full nigh,  
Then hurled Atreides, and missed, for aside did his javelin glance : 605  
But Peisander at war-renowned Menelaus' shield with his lance  
Thrust out, but he might not prevail to drive the brass therethrough,  
For the broad targe held it aback, but the lance was shivered in two  
At the socket : yet glad was his heart, and he hoped for the victory.  
But Atreides hath snatched his white-starred brand from beside his thigh, 610  
And he leapt on his foe : but Peisander from under his buckler hath ta'en  
A fair bright brazen axe : of the olive's cloudy grain  
Was the long smooth-polished helve, and they closed in the fight, they twain.  
Down on the cone of the dark-maned helmet the battleaxe crashed [615  
On the ridge close under the crest : but the sword to his forehead hath flashed

At the root of the nose, and the skull-bones cracked, and his eyeballs, thrust  
From the sockets streaming with blood dropped down to his feet in the dust.  
So he bowed and he fell : and his heel on his breast did the conqueror plant,  
And he stripped from his shoulders his harness, and cried with a bitter taunt :

“ Thus, thus from the ships of the fleet-horsed Danaan host shall ye wend,  
O arrogant Trojans, whose lust for the dread fight knoweth no end !      [620  
Not void of despite, neither crownless of shame, shall ye hence depart—  
Such despite as ye did unto me, foul dogs, when never your heart  
Was afraid of the heavy wrath of Zeus who thunders in might,  
The Guest-ward, who yet shall destroy one day your town high-pight,      625  
O ye that have stolen my true-wed wife, and my treasure-store,  
And lawlessly fled, when she welcomed you kindly on that far shore !  
And now are ye furious-eager to cast the devouring flame  
On our sea-swift ships, and the heroes Achaian to slay by the same,—  
But I ween, be ye never so wild for the battle, ye yet shall be tame !      630  
Zeus, Father, in sooth they say that thy wisdom excelleth all,  
Both menfolk and Gods : yet from thine hand all these evils befall.  
Lo now, what pleasure thou hast in the scorers spiteful-willed,  
These Trojans, whose might is iniquitous ever, they cannot be filled  
With strife, and their lust for the swaying battle may never be stilled.      635  
There cometh of all things fulness, of sleep, and of amorous play ;  
And the winsome song and the graceful dance charm not alway :  
Yet surely a mortal would rather desire to be drunk with delight  
Of these, than of war : but the Trojans may never have surfeit of fight !”

So did he speak, and the blood-stained arms from the body he tare,      640

And these Menelaus the princely gave to his comrades to bear,  
 Then into the throng of the forefighters back did the hero fare.  
 Leapt on him there the son of Pylaimenes the king,  
 Harpalion ; to Troy had he come in the war-host's gathering  
 With his father beloved, but returned to his fatherland-home never more.  
 Then smote he the midst of the shield that the son of Atreus bore  
 With his spear from anigh, but he could not drive the brass therethrough,  
 And again to the throng of his war-fellows shrinking from death he withdrew,  
 Fearfully glancing around, lest any his flesh might smite.  
 Then followed him Mëriones with a brass-tipped arrow's flight ; 650  
 And it smote on his rightward haunch, and the point of the brass held on  
 Till clear to the bladder it pierced, forth-passing beneath the bone.  
 Then sank he down, in the arms of his friends as they closed around  
 Forth gasping his spirit, even as lieth outstretched on the ground [655  
 A worm ; and the dark blood gushed from his wound, till the earth was wet.  
 And the great-heart Paphlagonians wrought for his help, and they set  
 Their lord on a chariot, and bearing him thence unto Ilium they sped.  
 In sorrow amidst of them faring his father the hot tears shed ;  
 Howbeit requital none could he win for the son that was dead.  
 Sore wroth for the sake of the slain was the spirit of Paris then, 660  
 For his bond-friend he was mid the host of the Paphlagonian men ;  
 And vengeance-athirst for his sake a shaft brass-headed he shot.  
 Now a certain Euchênor there was, whom the seer Polyidus begot,  
 A wealthy man and a valiant : in Corinth was found his home.  
 Full well foreknowing his fate unto Troy in his ship had he come, 665

For that often his good grey sire Polyidus had told him his doom,  
 That either by sore disease he must waste unto death in his hall,  
 Or amidst of the galleys Achaian by hands of the Trojans fall.  
 So he shrank from the war-fine stern that Achaia's host bade pay,  
 And the loathly disease, that in torment his spirit might pass not away. 670  
 'Neath the jaw and the ear was he smitten, and swiftly fled to his soul  
 From his limbs, and thereat did a horror of darkness over him roll.

So there with the fury of blazing fire their battle they fought :  
 But Hector the Zeus-beloved knew not, he had heard not aught  
 How that his folk to the left of the galleys were stricken down 675  
 By the hands of the Argives : and soon the Achaians had won them renown,  
 So mightily ever the Earth-enfolder, the Girder of Lands,  
 Was cheering them on—yea, helped them withal with his own strong hands.  
 But there was he still where he leapt through the gates and the wall at the first,  
 What time through the serried ranks of the Danaan spearmen he burst ; 680  
 For there the galleys of Aias and Protesilaus were,  
 Down on the beach of the hoary-foaming sea, and there  
 Lowest the rampart was builded : in that place hottest of all  
 Was the strife of the heroes and horses beneath that rifted wall.  
 The Bæotians there, and in trailing tunics Ionia's sons, 685  
 And, with Lokrians and Phthians, Epeians, battle-glorious ones,  
 As he rushed on the ships, scarce stayed him, and could not work their desire  
 Wholly to beat back Hector the godlike, the fierce as fire.  
 And there were the chosen of Athens' sons, and their battle-lord  
 Led them, Menestheus, Peteôs' son, and beside him warred 690



Stichius, Pheidias, and Bias the strong : the Epeian array  
 With the Phyleïd Meges, Amphion, and Drakius, stood in the fray.  
 Battle-bider Podarkes and Medon led the Phthians on :—  
 Of Oïleus the godlike was Medon begotten, a handmaid's son.  
 So the hero was brother to Aias, but far from his fatherland 695  
 In Phylakê dwelt he, because that a man had been slain by his hand  
 Which was kinsman to Queen Eriôpis, his sire Oïleus' bride.  
 'Twas Podarkes the Phylakid Iphiklus' scion that warred by his side.  
 And these all armed in the van of the Phthians, the mighty of heart,  
 With Bœotians guarding the ships in the battle played their part. 700  
 And all this while swift Aias the son of Oïleus shrank  
 No whit from the side of Telamon's son in the foremost rank :  
 But as when in a fallow field two oxen tawny of hue  
 With equal spirit are drawing the plough, and the plenteous dew  
 Of their toil at the roots of their horns upwelleth the while they strain, 705  
 And naught but the polished yoke is keeping asunder the twain,  
 As adown the furrow they press till they stay at the tilthland's end,  
 So shoulder to shoulder the twain stood, friend by hero-friend.  
 But in sooth there were henchmen many that followed Telamon's seed,  
 All valiant men, who received the shield of their lord at his need, 710  
 Whensoever his limbs were spent with sweat, and with toil fordone :  
 But never a Lokrian followed Oïleus' great-heart son,  
 For they bare no steadfast spirit to bide the standing fight :  
 No brazen helmets they had with the horse-mane darkly dight,  
 Nor bucklers shapely-rounded nor ashen spears had these, 715

But trusting in bows and in slings of the deftly-twisted fleece  
Unto Ilium they came with their lord, and with these the ranks they rent  
Of Troy with the hail of the stones and the rain of the arrows they sent.  
So the heroes twain in the forefront in armour cunningly wrought  
Against the Trojans and brazen-harnessed Hector fought. 720  
But they to the rearward shot unseen, till the foe no more  
Remembered the battle's delight, for the arrows galled them sore.

Then from the tents and the galleys in sorriest plight hurled back  
Unto Ilium the windy the Trojans had fled from the battle-wrack,  
But Polydamas came unto Hector the valiant, and thus spake he : 725

“ Headstrong art thou, O Hector, when men would counsel thee.  
Forasmuch as in deeds of war God made thee ever the best.  
Therefore in counsel thou fain wouldst be wiser than all the rest.  
Howbeit thou canst not take on thee all things thus at thy will,  
For in war God maketh one man to have the pre-eminence still, 730  
And another in dancing, another in harp and song hath skill.  
But far-seeing Zeus unto one the excellent wisdom hath given,  
To bless full many a man by the peerless gift of heaven,  
And many to save,—but the blessing's fulness he knoweth alone.  
Lo now as I deem shall be best will I unto thee make known : 735  
On all sides round as a crown upblazeth the flame of the fight,  
And now that the great-heart Trojans have scaled the rampart's height,  
Some stand in their war-gear aloof, and they that the battle abide  
Are a few against many, along the galleys scattered wide.  
But go thou back, call hitherward all our mightiest men, 740

And so in the fulness of counsel shall we resolve us then  
 Whether on yon long galleys to charge triumphant down,  
 If God peradventure shall will to vouchsafe to us victory's crown,  
 Or in any wise back from the ships to return without bane ; for to-day,  
 I fear me, the sons of Achaia their yesterday's debt may repay ; 745  
 For beside the galleys abideth a battle-insatiate foe,  
 A man who will never refrain him wholly from strife, I trow."

Then good in Hector's sight was Polydamas' wary rede ;  
 Fortright from his chariot he sprang to the ground in battle-weed,  
 And he lifted his voice unto him, and he sped the winged word-flight : 750

" Polydamas, stay thou in this place all our chiefest of might,  
 But yonder will I betake me, and plunge mid the surges of fight,  
 And with speed will return, when my hest unto those hath been uttered aright."

Then gleaming huge as a snow-clad mountain in haste he departed  
 With a shout, and through ranks of Troy and her warrior-aid hath he darted.  
 And they to Polydamas Panthoüs' son the courteous-hearted  
 All hasted, so soon as they hearkened Hector's rallying cry.  
 Through the forefighters seeking Déiphobus then did the hero hie ;  
 And for princely Helenus' might, and for Akamas Asius' seed,  
 And for Asius Hyrtakus' son there searched he with diligent heed. 760  
 Yet he found not the heroes wholly unscathed, neither all unslain ;  
 But beside the sterns of the galleys Achaian did some remain  
 Where the hands of the Argive men had spilled their life in the dust,  
 And some at the rampart, smitten by cast of the spear or by thrust.  
 One found he far on the left of the tear-drenched battle that warred, 765

The prince Alexander the godlike, the fair-tressed Helen's lord,  
 Heartening stoutly his comrades, and cheering them on to the fray :  
 But Hector strode to his side, and with bitter words 'gan say :

“ False Paris the comely, seducer, woman-distraught !—say thou  
 Where is the might of Dêiphobus, where King Helenus now ? 770  
 And Adamas Asius' scion, and Asius Hyrtakus' son ?  
 Say, where is Othryoneus ?—Now steep-reared Troy is undone  
 Wholly in ruin's precipice-plunge that none may shun !”

But from Alexander the godlike the answer straightway came :  
 “ Hector, the thought of thine heart is to blame the guiltless of blame. 775  
 Some other season perchance am I like to flinch from the war ;  
 Not now :—not wholly a dastard was he that my mother bore.  
 For since at the first thou didst kindle thy men to the fight with the foes  
 Still with the Danaan host in the grapple of fight do we close  
 Ceaselessly. Dead are the comrades whereof thou art questioning. 780  
 Only Dêiphobus' might and Helenus the king  
 Are gone, for with spears long-shafted stricken were both in the strife  
 In the hand, yet still from destruction Kronion redeemed their life.  
 Now lead on whithersoever thy spirit moveth thee,  
 And battle-eager will we follow after : I tell thee that we 785  
 In prowess will nowise fail thee, so far as our strength may attain :  
 But beyond his strength none warreth, nay, be he never so fain.”

So did he speak, and the wrath of his brother was turned away ;  
 And they plunged mid the tangle of battle, the heart and the heat of the fray,  
 Yea, where round Kebriones and Polydamas' princely form, 790



Round Phalkus, Orthaius, and stout Polyphoites, raged that storm,  
 And around Askanius, Palmys, and Morys, warriors wight,  
 Hippotion's sons : from Askaniê the fruitful with yesterday's light  
 Had they come in their course to the war, and now Zeus stirred them to fight.

Onward they charged as onward rusheth the fierce winds' blast 795  
 Which fleeth before Allfather's thunder landward fast,

As with turmoil unearthly they blend with the brine, and beneath them leap  
 The mountain-swelling waves of the manifold-roaring deep,  
 High-arched, foam-crested, as vanward and rearward their surge-hosts sweep ;  
 Even so the Trojans, to vanward these, and to rearward those, 800  
 Flashing with brass followed after their captains to clash with their foes.

And Hector like unto Earth-curse Arês was leading the charge,  
 And the Priamid held before him the shapely-rounded targe  
 Close-welded of hides, with a brass plate massy-forged thereon,  
 And around his temples his tossing helmet wavering shone. 805

Forth striding he tried their battalions to right and to left o'er the field,  
 If perchance they would flinch from his onset as onward he came under shield.  
 But the souls in the breasts Achaian he troubled not thereby ;  
 And Aias with long strides came, and rang his challenge-cry : [810

“ What ho, good fellow, draw nearer!—why seek'st thou in vain to affright  
 The Argives ? I tell thee, not so skilless we are of fight ;  
 But the baleful scourge of Zeus hath availed the Achaians to tame.  
 Ha, what, and hopeth thy spirit to waste our galleys with flame ?  
 Ha, soon shalt thou find we also have hands to defend the same !  
 Verily, sooner far shall your stately-built town 815

By the might of our hands be taken and low in the dust brought down !  
But for thee—unto thee thyself, I tell thee, the hour is nigh  
When, fleeing, to Zeus and the rest of the Deathless in prayer thou shalt cry  
That fleetier than falcons may be thy steeds of the beautiful mane  
Which shall bear thee cityward storming in dust across the plain." 820


Even as he spake that word, a bird to the rightward flew,  
A soaring eagle, and shouted the host of Achaia thereto,  
Cheered by the omen : but Hector the glorious made reply :

" Aias, thou raving lubbard, what is the word of thy lie ?  
Would I were son so surely of Zeus for evermore, 825  
A child whom Hêrê the Queen to the Lord of the Aegis bore,  
And were honoured even as Athênê, or like to Apollo the King,  
As surely as this day shall unto all the Argives bring—  
Yea, all of them—mischief : and thou with the rest shalt be slain in that hour,  
If thou hast the heart to abide my spear, which shall surely devour 830  
Thy lily-hued skin : thou shalt fall by the galleys Achaian, and cloy  
With thy fat and the shreds of thy flesh the vultures and hounds of Troy !"

So spake he, and onward he led, and a yell unearthly broke  
From the heroes that followed, and cheering behind him charged the folk.  
And the Argives shouted against them : was none that forgot his might : 835  
'Gainst the charge of the oncoming champions of Troy were their ranks ready-  
And the roar of them rose to the welkin and Zeus's fields of light. [dight ;

## BOOK XIV.

*How Zeus was beguiled of Hêrê and Sleep, and the Trojans were smitten.*

 OR of Nestor unmarked was the shouting, albeit he sat at the wine,  
But he uttered the winged word-flight to the child of Asklêpius' line  
"Bethink thee, Machaon the godlike, whereunto this will grow :

Ever louder waxeth the shouting of strong foe grappling with foe.  
But thou now sit in thy place, and drink of the wine flame-gleaming, 5  
Till such time as by beautiful-tressed Hekamêdê the bath hot-steaming  
Be prepared, and she cleanse thy wound of the gouts of the clotted gore :  
But hasten will I unto where I may gaze all round on the war."

He spake, and a targe in the tent that lay hath he ta'en for his need,  
The shield of his son Thrasymêdes, the tamer of the steed, 10  
Far-flashing with brass : but the shield of the father was borne by the son :  
And his massy spear hath he grasped, whose point with the keen brass shone.  
And he strode from his tent and he stood, and he looked on a shameful sight,  
The Achaians in rout hurled backward, and they that stormed on their flight,  
The haughty Trojans ; and down was the rampart's frowning height. 15

And as when dark heaveth the mighty sea with soundless swell,  
 Boding the path of the tempest, the blasts' mad-shrieking yell,—  
 No more—neither forward its surges roll, nor athwart do they sweep,  
 Till the wind that is chosen of Zeus shall adown on the face of it leap ;  
 So wavered the ancient, and pondered divided in mind, or to speed 20  
 To the battle-throng of the Danaans, lords of the fleetfoot steed,  
 Or to go to the shepherd of folk, Agamemnon Atreus' son :  
 And thus, in his soul as he mused, him seemed it were best to be done :  
 To go to Atreides. But still the fighting hosts slew on,  
 And ever about their flesh the brass clanged tireless-fierce, 25  
 Clanged under the lashing blades and the long two-headed spears.

Then, up from the ships as they went, did the kings Zeus-fostered light  
 On Nestor, even the men that with brass had been wounded in fight ;  
 Tydeides, Odysseus, and Atreus' son Agamemnon were they.  
 For the galleys Achaian were drawn up far aloof from the fray 30  
 On the strand of the hoary sea ; for the first had they haled up high  
 Till their sterns stood fringing the plain, and the rampart they reared hard by.  
 For, wide albeit the sea-beach was, scant space was there  
 For all the galleys to lie, and straitened the war-folk were. [35  
 So rank behind rank did they range them, and filled with their mighty array  
 The long strand's mouth, even all 'twixt headland and headland that lay.  
 Therefore to gaze on the battle, to hearken the onset-roar, [sore  
 Came thronging the kings as they leaned on their spears, and their hearts were  
 In their breasts. Then met them the ancient, and Nestor was there in the way  
 And the souls in the breasts of the princes Achaian he thrilled with dismay. 40



Then also the lord Agamemnon uplifted his voice, and he cried :

“ O Nestor, Neleus’ son, Achaia’s crown of pride,

What hast thou to do the hero-devouring strife to forsake ?

I fear me lest furious Hector fulfil the word that he spake,

Which he cried in the midst of the Trojans, and threatened Achaia’s bane, 45

How that never to Ilium back from the ships would he turn him again,

Till with fire he should burn the galleys, and us in the midst should slay.

Even so did he speak, and behold, the fulfilment is on us this day.

Ah me, of a surety the other Achaians greave-bedight

Are wroth with me, even as Achilles, to whom I did despise : 50

Therefore they have no will by the rearward galleys to fight.”

And Gerenia’s chariot-champion Nestor made reply :

“ Yea, the fulfilment is hard by the door, and he that on high

Thundereth, Zeus himself, might bring naught else to pass.

For fallen the rampart is, whereof we had said, time was, 55

That a bulwark for ship and for man it should be that none might rend.

But lo, by the sea-swift galleys the storm of a strife without end

Aye waxeth. Thou couldst not tell, how keen soever thy ken,

From what side tosseth the surge of the rout of the Argive men,

For the tangled confusion of slaughter : the yell to the heaven doth go ! 60

But let us bethink us now whereunto this shall grow,

If aught man’s wit may avail :—howbeit I would not say

Let us enter the battle ; for not for the wounded men is the fray.”

Then spake Agamemnon the King of Men with faltering lips :

“ Nestor, seeing that now they fight by the rearmost ships, 65

And seeing the rampart hath nothing availed, and the trench is naught  
At the which the Danaans toiled sore-travailing—yea, and they thought  
That for galley and man a bulwark that none should rend it had been,—  
The pleasure of Zeus that excelleth in strength is this, I ween,  
That nameless and fameless from Argos afar the Achaians be lost. 70  
I have known when gracious-willed he defended the Danaan host,  
And I know how standeth it now, when with glory our foes he hath crowned  
As the glory of Gods ever-blest, and our might and our hands hath he bound.  
But come now, as I shall say, even so let us hearken and do :—  
The foremost galleys, the rank that nighest the sea we drew, 75  
Hale we adown : on the mighty sea let us launch them all,  
And by sleepers moor them out in the deep, till the shadows fall  
Of the night divine, if haply the foemen then will refrain  
From the battle ; thereafter the rest might we launch, even all which remain.  
I account it not shame to flee, yea, even by night, from bane. 80  
It is better with him that outrunneth destruction than him that is ta'en."

But Odysseus the manifold-counselled with stern glance answered and said :  
"Atreides, what saying is this through the fence of thy teeth which hath fled !  
O fraught with mischief!—would God thou wert chief of another array,  
Some caitiff host, not lord over us, unto whom alway 85  
From youth unto age Zeus giveth to knit up skein upon skein  
Of troublous war, till one after one we be all of us slain !  
So shameless-eager the Trojans' broad-wayed town to forsake  
Art thou, after all the afflictions that we have endured for her sake ?  
Keep silence, lest on another Achaian's ears it should fall, 90

This word, which none would suffer to 'scape through his lips at all  
 Who had wisdom of heart to utter the thing that was right, and who swayed  
 A sceptre of kings, and to whom so many people obeyed  
 As these over whom mid the Argives thou art captain and head.  
 Lo, now do I wholly condemn thy wit for the word thou hast said, 95  
 Who bid'st, when the battle is joined, when the war-cry rings through the air,  
 Seaward to drag the ships, that the Trojans' uttermost prayer  
 May more be accomplished than now, though this be their triumphing day,  
 And that sudden destruction may fall upon us : for Achaia's array  
 Will bide not the battle, beholding the ships dragged down to the sea, 100  
 But will flinch from the fight, the while they glance round fearfully.  
 Then, chieftain of folk, shall destruction be born of thy counsel and thee."

Spake Agamemnon the King of Men to Laertes' son :  
 "Odysseus, thy bitter reproof deep into mine heart hath gone.  
 Yet deem not that I to the sons of Achaia give such command 105  
 As to launch in their hearts' despite the fair-benched ships from the strand.  
 Now would there were one who would speak to us counsel better than this,  
 Be he young, be he old : right welcome it were unto me, I wis."

Then Diomedes the battle-helper uttered his rede :  
 "Not afar is the man, neither long shall we seek, if your will be indeed 110  
 To hearken and do, and ye chafe not each with indignant scorn  
 Because that here in your midst I am even the youngest-born.  
 Nathless my birth do I boast of a sire of high renown,  
 Tydeus,—the earth-mound shroudeth him now in Thêbê-town :—  
 For sons were gotten of Pentheus three, a princely band, 115

And in Pleuron they wont to dwell, and in Kalydon's craggy land,  
Agrius, Melas, and car-borne Oineus—youngest was he,  
My father's sire, but in manhood-might was he chiefest of three.  
In the land he abode, but my father to Argos wandering went,  
And dwelt there, by purpose of Zeus, I ween, and the God's intent. 120  
And he wedded a child of Adrastus, and dwelt in a palace there  
Wealthy in substance, and his was abundance of tilth-land fair  
Golden with wheat, and orchards he had full many an one,  
And sheepflocks many were his, and the Argives all he outshone  
In the craft of the spear—ye shall surely have heard, if I speak not a lie. 125  
Therefore ye shall not say that a base-born weakling am I,  
To despise, when I speak good counsel, the word that proceedeth from me.  
Let us hence to the fight, for we may not choose, though wounded we be.  
Then, beyond reach of the darts, from the heart of the battle-strain  
Will we hold us aloof, lest wound upon wound peradventure we gain. 130  
But the rest will we kindle and speed to the battle, which heretofore  
Gave ear to their wrath, and in malice have played not their part in the war."  
He spake, and with right good will they hearkened and did as he said ;  
And they hied them to go, and the King of Men Agamemnon led.  
But the glorious Shaker of Earth kept no blind watch that day ; 135  
But in guise of an ancient man he met the kings in the way.  
By the right hand Atreus' son, Agamemnon the King, did he take,  
And he lifted his voice unto him, and the light-winged words he spake :  
" Atreides, haply Achilles' baleful heart of spite  
Rejoiceth within his breast as he seeth the slaughter and flight 140



Of Achaians, seeing he hath no wisdom, no, not a jot.

But in like wise so may he perish, and God so bring him to naught !

But the wrath of the blessèd Gods is against thee nowise hot ;

But yet shall the captains and lords of the Trojan folk, I wot,

In dust speed over the wide-spread plain, and thyself shalt see 145

When aback to the city from galley and tent afar they flee."

So spake he, and over the plain he rushed with a mighty shout

Loud as the cry of thousands nine or ten ringeth out,

When the heroes meet in the strife, when the War-god's flame is fanned,

So mighty a cry from his breast did the Shaker of the Land 150

Send forth, and with giant strength filled every Achaian heart,

That each man unfainting should war, and in battle play his part.

Now Hêrê the Golden-throned beheld with her eyes that sight

As she stood on the peak of Olympus and gazed, and she knew forthright

Him who was toiling so in the glory-wafting fight, 155

Her brother, her lord's withal, and filled was her soul with delight.

And Zeus upon fountain-flashing Ida's topmost crest

Sitting she saw, and the hatred against him surged in her breast.

Then did the Lovely-eyed, the Lady Hêrê, muse

How she might cozen the spirit of Aegis-wielder Zeus. 160

And this in the thoughts of her heart she accounted the best device,

Unto Ida to go, having decked her beauty in winsome wise,

If haply her lord would desire by her body to lay him down

In love's embrace, that in slumber soft and sweet she might drown

His eyes and his piercing wit in the net of forgetfulness caught. 165

And she passed to her chamber, the bower by Hephaistus her dear son wrought,  
Who fastened the massy doors to the pillars cunningly  
With a secret bolt : no God could unlock it, but only she.  
So entered she in, and she shut the shining doors thereof.  
With ambrosia first from her body, the very snare of love, 170  
She cleansed all stain, and with oil of the olive anointed her o'er  
Ambrosial and soft, wherefrom did a savour of sweetness pour.  
On the brazen floor of Zeus were a drop from the casket spilled,  
With the breath of the odour thereof were the earth and the heaven filled.  
Therewithal she anointed her lovely body, she combed her hair, 175  
And deftly her fingers braided the tresses unearthly-fair  
That streamed from the deathless head in ambrosia-breathing sheen.  
And she folded about her the robe which Athênê had wrought for the Queen  
With her uttermost cunning, and traced it with broidery-marvels untold ;  
And she clasped it about her breast with the brooches of fashioned gold ; 180  
And she girded her waist with a girdle with tassels a hundred bedight,  
And she set in her dimpled ears the earrings glistening bright,  
Triple-dropped, from whose wavering burnish there lightened abundant grace.  
Then over her head a veil did the glorious Goddess place,  
New-woven and fair ; as the sunlight streamed its splendour around : 185  
And under her radiant feet her beautiful sandals she bound.  
So when she had decked her body in all her adornment's pride,  
Forth of her chamber she passed, and she called Aphroditê aside  
Apart from the rest of the Gods, and her speech unto her she addressed :  
" Wilt thou hearken and do, dear child, according to this my request ? 190

Or wilt thou refuse me, because thou art angered for this in thine heart  
That I am the Danaans' helper, and thou dost take Troy's part?"

Spake thereupon Aphroditê, and Zeus' child made reply :

" O Hêrê daughter of Kronos, Lady of Majesty,  
Utter thy thought, for mine heart doth bid me perform thy will, 195  
If perform it I may, if the deed be a deed that hands may fulfil."

And with guileful intent unto her did the Lady Hêrê say :

" Now give to me Love and Desire, wherewithal thou dost bend to thy sway  
All the Immortals, and all the children of mortal birth.  
For I fare to the uttermost bounds of the all-sustaining earth, 200  
Unto Ocean the Gods' begetter, and Têthys which bare us of old :  
In their halls did they foster my childhood, in nursing arms did they fold,  
Which received me from Rheia, when Kronos of far-seeing Zeus was hurled  
Down, to abide 'neath the harvestless sea and the roots of the world.  
These fare I to see, and their truceless feud would I reconcile ; 205  
For now have they held them apart from each other a weary while,  
And the bed of love, for that pierced are their spirits with anger's dart.  
Now if with my words I could bend them, and melt the wrath-chilled heart,  
And cause the estranged to be joined in the bed of love as of yore,  
Dear should they call me and worship-worthy for evermore." 210

Then unto her Aphroditê the laughter-winsome replied :

"It may nowise be, nor is meet, that this thy request be denied,  
For thou sleepest in Zeus's arms when the Mightiest claspeth his bride."

She spake, and the cestus-band from her bosom the Goddess unbound  
Curious-wrought, wherein were all her enchantments found : 215

There Love is, and there is Desire, and the Whisper of Wooing is there,  
Whose subtlety stealeth the wit of the wise, how prudent soe'er.  
Even this did she lay in her hands, and she spake the word, and she said :

“ Lo there, let this my girdle within thy bosom be laid,  
Cunningly broidered, wherein all spells be fashioned : I wot 220  
Thou wilt not return in vain, with thine heart's desire unwrought.”

So spake she, and smiled the Lady Hêrê the Lovely-eyed,  
And smiling the girdle within her bosom's fold did she hide.  
Then to her bower the daughter of Zeus Aphroditê passed ;  
But Hêrê away from the peak of Olympus darted fast ; 225  
On Pieria a moment, and lovely Emathia-land, did she tread,  
And over the snow-clad hills of the horsemen of Thrace she fled,  
Yea, over their crests, and she grazed not the ground with her feet as she sped.  
And from Athos over the sea ever tossing his waves is she gone,  
Till at last unto Lemnos, the city of Thoas the godlike, she won. 230  
There met she Sleep, even him that is brother unto Death,  
And she clasped his hand in her own, and she spake with eager breath :

“ Sleep, king over all the Gods and all the children of men,  
Thou hast hearkened my prayer in the days overpast, O hearken again ;  
And thou shalt have my thanks so long as endure thy days. 235  
Lull me the eyes whose lightning beneath Zeus' brows doth blaze,  
So soon as I lay me down by his side in love's embrace.  
And gifts will I give thee for this—a throne of unperishing gold  
Most fair, which Hephaistus my son the Twin-right-armed shall mould  
With his uttermost cunning, a footstool beneath for thy feet therewithal : 240



Thereon shalt thou rest thy glistering feet in the feastful hall."

Forthright to the Goddess he spake, and sweet Sleep made reply :

"Great Kronos' child, O Hêrê Lady of Majesty,

Were it any other than this of the Gods that endure for ever,

Lightly to sleep would I lull him—yea, the streams of the River 245

Of Ocean the first begetter of all that hath life—but no,

Anigh unto Zeus the Kronos-begotten I dare not go,

Neither lull him to slumber, except himself commanded it so.

For once ere now was I lessoned of such a behest of thine,

On the day when he, Zeus' child high-hearted, over the brine 250

Went sailing from Troy, having wasted the Trojans' battle-keep :

Ah then did I lull the soul of the Aegis-wielder to sleep,

Shed in my sweetness about him : and mischief was plotted of thee

Who didst waken the blasts of the winds rough-blustering over the sea,

And didst sweep him away unto fair-built Kos on a stormy path 255

Afar from his every friend. And Zeus awoke in his wrath,

And he hurled through his mansion the Gods, and me did he seek above all,

And had flung me adown from the sky to the sea in ruinous fall,

But the Night was my saviour, the overcomer of Gods and of men,

For I fled unto her, and for all his wrath he refrained him then ; 260

For he dreaded to do displeasure to Night of the dark swift wing.

And now dost thou bid me again do this, an impossible thing."

Made answer to him Queen Hêrê the Lovely-eyed, and she said :

"O Sleep, what visions be these for the which thy soul is adread ?

What, deemest thou Zeus for the helping of Trojans hath such desire 265

As when for his own son Hêrakles' sake his wrath was afire?  
Nay, go thou, and one of the Graces younger-born unto thee  
Will I give to wed, to be called thy bride, even Pasithee,  
Yea, her for whom evermore through all thy days thou hast yearned." [270

So spake she, and answered Sleep, as for gladness the heart in him burned :  
" Come then, by Styx' inviolate water swear to me now,  
And the one of thine hands on the all-sustaining earth lay thou,  
And the one on the shining sea, that the witnesses 'twixt us twain  
May be all the Underworld Gods that with Kronos in darkness remain,  
That thou surely wilt give of the Graces younger-born unto me 275  
Her that through all my days I desire, even Pasithee."

So spake he, and Hêrè the white-armed Goddess denied not his prayer,  
But she spake as he bade, and naming the Awful Names she sware,  
And in dungeons in nethermost Tartarus all the Titans heard.  
And so, when the oath was accomplished, and spoken was every word, 280  
From Lemnos they passed, and the burg of Imbros, and on fared they  
Shrouded about with mist, and swiftly they sped on their way.  
And to Ida the fountain-flashing, the mother of beasts, they won,  
Unto Lekton : there left they the sea, and over the land are they gone,  
While tossed 'neath their feet the crests of the forest's billows of green. 285  
There tarried Sleep, or ever by eyes of Zeus he was seen ;  
For he lighted down on a tall pine-tree, the highest that grew  
Upon Ida, and towered through her mist-veil up to the stainless blue ;  
There sat he, and round him the screen of its branches the pine-tree drew.  
And the likeness he took of the shrill-voiced bird, the mountain-birth, 290

Which Chalkis Immortals call, and Kymindis the children of earth.  
 And to Gargarus, crown of lofty Ida, did Hêrê fare  
 Swiftly, and Cloudrack-gatherer Zeus beheld her there :  
 And so soon as he saw, did desire his inmost heart enfold,  
 As when at the first they were joined in love in the days of old, 295  
 When couchward they wended, and they that had borne them beheld not nor  
 And he stood before her and spake, and he uttered forth the word : [heard.

“ Hêrê, with what intent from Olympus hast hitherward hied, [ride ? ”  
 And thine horses are not with thee, nor thy chariot, whereon thou shouldst  
 Spake Hêrê the Queen, and her words were the web of a guileful snare : 300

“ To the uttermost parts of the all-sustaining earth I fare,  
 Unto Ocean the Gods’ begetter, and Têthys which bare us of old ;  
 In their halls did they foster my childhood, in nursing arms did they fold.  
 These fare I to see, and their truceless feud would I reconcile,  
 For now have they held them apart from each other a weary while, 305  
 From the bed of love, for that anger hath pierced the hearts of them deep.  
 And my steeds at the foot of Ida’s fountain-flashing steep  
 Stand, which shall bear me over the land and the tossing foam.  
 But for thy sake down from Olympus hitherward speeding I come  
 Lest thou haply hereafter be angered with me, if in silence I go 310  
 Away unto Ocean’s halls, and the deep stream’s endless flow.”

Then unto her made answer Zeus the Cloudrack-lord :  
 “ Hêrê, hereafter shall serve for thy journeying thitherward ;  
 But now let us couch us for love’s delight, even I and thou ;  
 For never did love of Goddess or woman so strangely bow 315

My spirit, nor flooded the soul in my breast so much as now.  
 Not when the wife of Ixion seemed to mine heart so dear,  
 Which brought forth Peirithoüs, the high Gods' counsel-peer ;  
 Nor by Danaë, slim-footed child of Akrisius, so was I bound,  
 Which brought forth Perseus, amidst all menfolk high-renowned ; 320  
 Nor yet when the daughter of Phoinix the far-famed held me in thrall,  
 Which bare to me Minos and Rhadamanthus the godlike withal,  
 Nor when Semelê's love, nor Alkmênê's couch in Thêbê I won,  
 Which brought forth Hêrakles her mighty-hearted son ;—  
 But Semelê bare Dionysus who gladdeneth men with the vine ;— 325  
 Neither when Queen Dêméter the beautiful-tressed was mine,  
 Or far-famed Lêto ; nor yet when for thee mine heart was afire :  
 It was not with the love of to-day, with the rapture of this my desire."

But with cunning intent unto him the Lady Hêrê said :  
 "What hast thou to do saying this, O Kronos' son most dread ? 330  
 If now in the bed of love thou art fain to lay thee down  
 Where all things be seen from afar, even Ida's topmost crown,  
 How would it be if one of the Gods everlasting should spy  
 Us twain as we slept, and to all the rest of the Gods should hie  
 And tell it ?—I could not uprise from the couch, and again to thine hall 335  
 Return ; there were indignation and scorn in the eyes of all.  
 But and if thou art fain of this, and thine heart is set thereon,  
 A chamber thou hast, which was wrought of thy well-belovèd son  
 Hephaistus, yea, and he knit strong doors to the pillars thereof :  
 Thither go we to lie, since fair in thy sight is the couch of love." 340



But spake to her Zeus, and the Cloudrack-gatherer answered her then :

“ O Hêrê, fear not thou lest any of Gods or of men

Should espy, with a cloud so thick will I veil us, a cloud all gold.

Nay, not even the Sun should pierce its compassing fold

To discern us, albeit his eye be the keenest of all to behold.” 345

He spake, and the Son of Kronos hath caught in his arms his Queen ;

And beneath them the earth divine shot up the sward's fresh green ;

And the dew-sprent lotus and crocus and hyacinth blossomed around

Thick-growing and soft, that the flower-couch bare them up from the ground.

Thereon did they lie, and were clothed about with a golden cloud 350

Most fair, and the glistening dews shimmered down from its shining shroud.

So slumbered in utter quiet Allfather on Gargarus' breast,

By Sleep and by love overborne, yet clasping his bride to his breast.

But sweet Sleep ran where the galleys Achaian fringed the sands

With tidings thereof to the Shaker of Earth, the Girder of Lands. 355

And he came and he stood by his side, and he uttered the winged word-flight :

“ Help thou the Danaans now, Poseidon, with heart and with might,

And vouchsafe them renown, though it be but a moment, while still doth sleep

Zeus : I have folded him round with slumber soft and deep,

For that Hêrê hath brought him by guile in the bed of love to lie.” 360

He spake, and was gone far over the tribes of men to fly ;

But he kindled the God for the help of the Danaan men yet more.

Far leapt he forthright to the forefront, and cried through the battle-roar :

“ Ye Argives, what, yet again shall we lay the victory down

At the feet of Hector, to take the ships and to win him renown ? 365

O ay, such his thought is and boast, since Achilles abideth apart  
By his hollow galleys, and broodeth still on the wrath of his heart !  
Yet our grief for his loss shall be nowise so sore, if but we that remain  
Be yet of good courage to help our fellows in battle-strain.  
But come now, as I shall counsel, so let us all obey : 370  
What shields soever be best and greatest in all our array  
Take we on our arms, and let flame-flashing helmets our temples clasp,  
And the longest spears that be found in the host in our hands let us grasp,  
And so let us on : even I will be leader : no more, I ween,  
Will Hector the Priamid stand, be he never so eager-keen. 375  
And whoso is battle-steadfast, and hath but a little shield,  
Let him give to a worsen man, and a broader targe let him wield."

He spake, and with right good will they hearkened his rede and obeyed :  
And the Kings themselves in their wounds' despite their battle arrayed,  
Tydeides, Odysseus, and King Agamemnon, Atreus' son. 380  
And they passed through the host, and to others they gave their armour to don.  
So the strong had harness strong, and he gave to the weaker wight  
The weaker : and when they had clad their flesh in the brass flame-bright,  
Onward they bore, and their onset Poseidon the Earth-shaker led,  
In his brawny hand high-tossing a keen-edged falchion dread 385  
Like to the lightning, wherewith to grapple in bitter fight  
No man may dare, but afar therefrom men shrink in affright.

But Hector the glorious against them marshalled the Trojan array.  
Then strained betwixt these twain was a passing-fearful fray,  
Poseidon the raven-haired and Hector the glorious lord, 390

As the one gave help to the Trojans, and one for the Danaans warred.  
 Then surged up the sea to the galleys, the whirling foam-flakes fell  
 On the Argive tents, and the war-hosts clashed with a mighty yell.  
 Not with such clamour the sea-surf shouteth against the land  
 By the blast of the bitter North from the outsea hurled to the strand ; 395  
 Neither so loud is the roar of the blazing fire, in the hour  
 When through glens of the mountain it raveth, the trees of the wood to devour ;  
 Neither shrieketh so madly the wind through the oak-trees lofty-tressed,  
 Albeit the roar of its rage is of all things mightiest,  
 As the sound of the cry of Achaian and Trojan warriors rang 400  
 As they terribly shouted, and foeman to grapple with foeman sprang.

First against Aias did Hector the glorious his javelin throw,  
 Full front as the hero faced him : yea, and he missed not his foe,  
 But smote where his breast with the baldrics twain was crosswise barred,  
 The one of his shield, and the one of his falchion silver-starred ; 405  
 And these were a fence for his flesh : and Hector chafed in wrath  
 Because that the swift shaft fled from his hand on a bootless path :  
 And aback to the throng of his war-fellows shunning the doom he withdrew.  
 But, as backward he shrank, Telamonian Aias the mighty threw  
 A great stone—such were there many for props to the sea-swift ship— 410  
 As it rolled mid the fighters' feet : this Aias upheaved in his grip,  
 And dashed on his breast by the neck clear over the rim of the shield :  
 With the shock like a whirlwind he twisted him, this way and that way he reeled.  
 And as when Allfather's lightning hath felled by the roots an oak,  
 And fearfully reeketh the brimstone-fume from the levin-stroke : 415

—No spirit is left in the man who beholdeth the terrible thing,  
Who was hard by the path of the lightning of Zeus the Aegis-king ;—  
So suddenly earthward in dust was the might of Hector dashed.  
Whirled from his hand was the spear, but upon him his shield down clashed,  
And his helm and his brass-dight arms clanged round that fallen man. 420  
And upon him mightily shouting the sons of Achaia ran,  
Hoping to drag him away, and their lances thick and fast  
They hurled : but they could not wound by thrust or by javelin-cast  
The shepherd of folk : ere then did the champions compass him round,  
Polydamas, godlike Agênor, Aeneas, and there was found 425  
Sarpedon the chief of the Lycians, Glaukus the princely withal.  
Was none that was heedless of him, but they held for a battle-wall  
Before him their shapely shields ; and his comrades uplifted and bare  
In their hands that hero forth of the toil, till they came unto where  
His swift steeds far to rearward of all that battle and war 430  
Abode with the charioteer and the cunningly fashioned car.  
Then citywards groaning and groaning again they sped their lord.  
But when they were come to the fair-flowing river, the flashing ford  
Of swirling Xanthus, the child of Zeus that abideth for aye,  
To the earth from the car did they lift him, and over his face poured they 435  
Water : then breathed he again, and he opened his eyes once more,  
And he rose to his knees, and he vomited forth the dark-hued gore.  
Then backward again to the earth he sank, and his eyes grew dim  
With black night's veil, for the stroke yet mastered the spirit of him.  
Now so soon as the Argives beheld how Hector was fleeing away, 440



On the Troyfolk yet more fiercely they rushed, and were fain of the fray.  
 And before all other did Aias, Oïleus' fleetfoot seed,  
 The thrust of the keen-whetted lance at the son of Enops speed,  
 Even Satnius, born of a Naiad, a peerless nymph divine,  
 Unto Enops, the while by Satnioeis he tended the kine. 445  
 Now nigh to him came Oïleus' scion, the spear-renowned,  
 And stabbed at his flank, and backward reeling he fell to the ground ;  
 And around him the strife of the Trojan and Danaan men waxed fierce.  
 Came Polydamas Panthoüs' son for his helping, the shaker of spears,  
 And his lance unto prince Prothoênor's rightward shoulder he sped, 450  
 The son of Arêilykus, and the javelin's thunderbolt head  
 Cleft through, and in dust down falling he clutched with his palm at the earth.  
 And with shout far-pealing Polydamas vaunted in terrible mirth :  
 " Ha ha ! from the brawny hand of Panthoüs' son high-hearted  
 Once more not vainly, I ween, hath the javelin's lightning darted, 455  
 But an Argive hath welcomed it home to his flesh !—'tis a staff, I trow,  
 Leaning whereon to the mansion of Hades down shall he go."  
 So spake he, and anguish came on the Argives to hear that vaunt,  
 And chiefly the spirit of Aias the war-wise was stung by the taunt,  
 Even Telamon's son, for to him did the slain man fall most near, 460  
 And as turned him the smiter, he suddenly hurled with his glittering spear.  
 But Polydamas' self from the black doom swerved with a sidelong bound.  
 But Archelochus, son of Antenor, that terrible gift hath found,  
 Forasmuch as the Gods devised his destruction : the lance-point came [465  
 'Twixt his head and his neck, and it smote on the meeting-place of the same

At the nethermost bone of the skull, and it severed the tendons twain :  
And his head and his mouth and his nostrils smote on the dust of the plain  
Or ever his legs and his knees, as he fell, to the earth were bowed.  
And Aias in turn unto prince Polydamas shouted aloud :

“ Bethink thee, Polydamas, tell me, nor utter lying breath— 470  
Is not the slaughter of this man for Prothoênor's death  
Fair quittance?—no weakling I deem him, nor gotten of weaklings' seed ;  
But the brother he is of Antenor the tamer of the steed,  
Or a son :—for to him doth he seem of his lineage nearest born.”

Well-knowing he spake, and the souls of the Trojans were anguish-torn. 475  
Then Akamas stood o'er his brother, and stabbed Bœotia's son  
Promachus, even as he haled by the foot that slaughtered one.  
And Akamas vaunted with terrible cry ringing far through the host :

“ Ye Argive bowman-churls, insatiate of threatening boast,  
Not unto us alone, good sooth, shall be labour and pain ; 480  
Nay, but I ween ye too in the selfsame wise shall be slain !  
Mark ye how hushed into sleep by my spear before your eyes  
Promachus lieth, that so my brother's atonement-price  
May not long be unpaid. For such kinsman as this might one well pray  
To leave in his halls to avenge him in battle's evil day !” 485

So spake he, and anguish came on the Argives that heard that vaunt ;  
And war-wise Pênelleôs most chiefly was stung by the taunt,  
And on Akamas rushed he : howbeit the onset he dared not abide  
Of Bœotia's king, so that Ilioneus by his spear-thrust died,  
Child of the sheep-lord Phorbas, whom Hermes wont to hold 490

Dearest of all the Trojans, and gave to him wealth untold.

And the selfsame Ilioneus was his mother's only son.

'Neath the eyebrow down to the roots of the eye hath the spear-head gone,  
And it thrust the eyeball forth, and the shaft through the socket sped, [495  
And out through the nape of his neck : and with both hands wide outspread  
Down sank he, and Pèneleôs from the scabbard his keen brand drew,  
And lashed at the midst of his neck, and down on the earth he threw  
The head yet sheathed in the helmet, and still was the mighty spear  
In the eye, and the head like the head of a poppy on high did he rear  
And showed to the Trojan men, and the word of his vaunt rang loud : 500

“ Ho Trojans, tell to the father of Ilioneus the proud,  
And his mother, I pray you, to make their lament in a desolate house,  
As neither the young Alegênorid's wife, even Promachus' spouse,  
Shall rejoice for the coming again of her dear-loved lord, in the day  
When the sons of Achaia from Troyland sail the homeward way.” 505

He spake, and the limbs of them all were palsied with sickness of fear,  
And each glanced round for escape from destruction sudden-sheer.

Tell me, ye Muses now, in Olympus' halls that abide,  
Who first of Achaians uplifted a foeman's spoils blood-dyed  
When the glorious Shaker of Earth turned backward the battle-tide. 510  
Telamonian Aias the first stabbed Hyrtius, Gyrtias' son,  
Who battleward led the dauntless-hearted Mysians on :  
Phalkês' and Mermerus' harness of fight hath Antilochus ta'en ;  
Hippotion withal and Morys of Mêriones were slain :  
And Teucer dealt Periphêtes and Prothoön a swift death-stroke ; 515

And thereafter Atreides stabbed Hyperénor a shepherd of folk  
On the flank, and the bowels of the wretch followed after the gleaming brass,  
And out through the portal of that grim gash did the soul of him pass  
Swift-rushing, and over his eyes did the veil of darkness fall.  
But Aias, Oileus' fleetfoot son, slew more than all ;  
For like unto him was there none to follow the foemen's flight  
With avenging feet, when Zeus had thrilled them with panic-affright.



## BOOK XV.

*How Zeus turned backward the battle, and fire was cast on the galleys.*

**B**UT when through the palisade-fence and the trench the Trojans had fled,  
And stricken of Danaan hands full many an one lay dead,  
Then stayed them beside their cars that panic-palsied folk,  
Then halted they, pale with their fear. And Zeus from his sleep awoke  
By the side of Hêrê the golden-throned upon Ida's crown. 5  
And he leapt to his feet, and on them of Achaia and Troy looked down ;  
Saw fleers, a huddled rout, saw them that stormed on their track,  
Argives, and King Poseidon amidst of the battle-wrack,  
Saw Hector lie on the plain, and his comrades to right and to left  
Sat, as he gasped hard-fetching his breath all sense-bereft, 10  
Vomiting blood—no weakling Achaian had dealt that blow !  
And the Father of Gods and Men had compassion, beholding him so,  
And to Hêrê he spake, and his eyes with a terrible fire were aglow :  
“ By thy mischievous guile of a truth, O Hêrê the stubborn-willed, [15  
Hath Hector been stayed from the fight, have his people been panic-thrilled !

Of a surety I know not but thou shalt thyself first taste the meed  
 Of thy pestilent weaving of ill, when I scourge thee with thongs for thy deed !  
 What, mindest thou not how on high thou wast hung, and anvils twain  
 I swung from thy feet, and about thy wrists did I cast a chain  
 Golden, that none might break ? In the welkin thou hung'st amid cloud ; 20  
 And through wide Olympus the Gods beheld it angry-browed :  
 Yet none might draw nigh for thy loosing ; but whomso I marked that essayed,  
 I would grasp him, and hurl from the threshold of heaven, till low he was laid  
 On the earth all faint : yet not even so might my wrath be assuaged,  
 My quenchless fury for heaven-born Hêrakles' sake that raged, 25  
 When thou with the North-wind didst league thee, suborning the blasts to thy  
 And didst drive him over the harvestless sea in thy purpose of ill, [will,  
 And thereafter didst cast him away upon Kos' fair-peopled shore.  
 Howbeit from thence did I save him, and brought him home once more  
 Unto Argos the horse-fed, albeit through many afflictions and toils. 30  
 Thereof yet again must I put thee in mind : thou shalt cease from thy wiles :  
 And so shalt thou see if the dalliance of love shall profit thee  
 Wherein thou didst join, when thou cam'st from the Gods and beguiledst me."

So spake he, and shuddered the Lady Hêrê the lovely-eyed,  
 And she uttered the winged word-flight, and unto her lord she cried : 35  
 " Be witness now this earth, and the heaven above spread wide,  
 And the down-rushing water of Styx—and this is the mightiest,  
 Yea, and the awfulest oath on the lips of the Gods ever blest :—  
 Be witness thy sacred head, and the couch that hath borne us twain,  
 The bridal bed, the name that I cannot take in vain, 40

That not of my prompting Poseidon the Shaker of Earth this day  
 Vexeth the Trojans and Hector, and helpeth Achaia's array :  
 But his own soul moved him, I ween, and constrained him pity-led,  
 Beholding Achaia's sons by the galleys sorely bestead.  
 Notwithstanding even with him, an thou wilt, full fain would I plead 45  
 To walk in the way as thou, O Cloudrack-shrouded, shalt lead."

So spake she, and smiled the Father of Gods and Men as he heard,  
 And he answered and spake unto her, and he loosed the light-winged word :

" If thou, O Lady Hêrê the lovely-eyed, indeed  
 With thine heart even as mine wouldst sit mid the deathless seed, 50  
 Full soon should Poseidon, how wilful-wayward soever he be,  
 Turn backward his purpose to follow the hearts of thee and me !  
 But now, if unfeigned is thy speech, if in truth thou hast spoken all,  
 Depart thou hence to the tribes of the Gods, and hitherward call  
 Iris to come unto me, and Apollo renowned with the bow, 55  
 That the one to the brazen-corsleted host of Achaians may go,  
 And may speak to Poseidon the King, and may tell mine hest to the God  
 To refrain from the war and to get him thence to his own abode,  
 And that Phoebus Apollo may rouse up Hector to battle again,  
 And may breathe might into his soul, and make him forget his pain, 60  
 The pangs outwearing his spirit, and turn the triumphant array  
 Of Achaia aback, and may thrill them with panic and craven dismay,  
 Till fleeing they fall midst the many-benched galleys of Pelcus' son  
 Achilles ; then to the fight shall he speed his comrade on,  
 Patroclus, and he by the spear of Hector the glorious shall fall 65

Before Ilium; yet full many a warrior stalwart and tall—  
Yea, godlike Sarpedon my son with the rest—shall he slaughter in fight.  
And wroth for his sake shall godlike Achilles Hector smite.  
But from that time forth will I turn the Trojans in panic of flight  
From the ships evermore without respite, till steep-built Ilium's day 70  
Shall come, and Athênê's counsel shall give the Achaians the prey.  
But till that hour come I refrain not my wrath, and I suffer not  
That of any Immortal beside to the Danaans succour be brought  
Or ever Peleides' prayer be fulfilled, the thing that I said  
When I gave unto him for the seal of my promise the nod of mine head, 75  
In the day when the Goddess Thetis low at my knees bowed down,  
And besought me to honour Achilles the waster of tower and town."

Then Hêrê the Goddess, the white-armed, hearkened his bidding to do.  
Down plunging from Ida's ridges to high Olympus she flew.  
And as darteth the thought of a man who hath journeyed by many a shore, 80  
And museth at home in the midst of his wisdom's garnered store,  
"Now would I were here or were there!"—wide range the desires of his heart;  
So swiftly with eager speed did the Lady Hêrê dart.  
And she came to the steps of Olympus, to Zeus's palace-dome,  
And the throng of the deathless Gods; and they, beholding her come, 85  
Leapt all to their feet, outstretching their cups to the Queen of Heaven.  
But she passeth the others by, and she taketh the chalice given  
Of Themis the beautiful-cheeked, for that foremost to meet her she sped,  
And she lifted her voice, and forth of her lips the winged words fled:

"O Hêrê, why art thou come?—thou seemest as one distraught! 90



Is it so, that the Son of Kronos, thy lord, thy dismaying hath wrought?"

Answered and spake to her Hêrê the Goddess with arms of snow :

"Ask me not this, O Goddess Themis : thyself dost know

What manner of spirit is his, overweening and ruthless-stern !

But lead thou the rest of the Gods, that again to the feast they may turn. 95

And so amidst all the Immortals thine ears shall hear the tale

Of the evil things that be uttered of Zeus, and his purpose of bale.

I tell thee, not all shall rejoice together such tidings to hear,

Nor mortals nor Gods, if still any banquet blithe of cheer."

Then Hêrê the Lady sat her adown, as thus she spake ; 100

And the Gods through the mansion of Zeus were heavy of heart ; and there

The laugh from her lips, but the brows overglooming her scowling eyes [brake

Laughed not, and amidst of them all she cried in indignant wise :

"Fools, we that in witlessness be angered with Zeus !—who still,

Good sooth, be fain to draw nigh, and to let him from working his will 105

By word or by force !—but nothing he heedeth : he sitteth apart

Uncaring :—'Amidst of the Deathless Ones,' he saith in his heart,

'I have the pre-eminence : chiefest am I in my power and my might.'

Therefore content you each one with the gifts of his mischief and spite !

For already, I fear me, with Arês the tale of our woes hath begun ; 110

For his child in the battle hath perished, his best-belovèd one,

Askalaphus, he whom Arês calleth his very son."

So spake she, and Arês smote upon either brawny thigh

With the palms of his hands, and he cried an exceeding bitter cry :

"Now be not indignant, O ye in Olympus' halls that abide, 115

That I fare to Achaia's ships to avenge my son which hath died,  
 Yea, though I be doomed by the lightning of Zeus to be smitten, and thrust  
 Down, amid corpses to lie in the midst of blood and dust."

So spake he, and shouted his hest to his servants, Dismay and Affright,  
 To harness his steeds, and he clad him in armour as lightning bright. 120  
 And then had a fury of Zeus flamed out more hot than before,  
 And his wrath had abode on the Deathless, a burden exceeding sore ;  
 But Athênê for all the high Gods' sake was stricken with dread, [she sped ;  
 And she sprang from the seat on the which she had sat: through the porchway  
 And she caught from his shoulders the buckler, the helm from his head she  
 And the brazen spear set by that his brawny hand had grasped: [unclasped,  
 And she chode with furious Arês with words indignant-hot :

"Mad, sense-forlorn, thou art all undone !—what, wholly for naught  
 Hast thou ears to hear, and thy wit and thine awe, be they utterly dead ?  
 Hast thou not heard what Hêrê the white-armed Goddess hath said, 130  
 Who from presence of Zeus the Lord of Olympus is come but now ?  
 What, wouldst thou fill up a measure of manifold ills, even thou,  
 And return sore loth in thine own despite to Olympus, and sow  
 For all the rest of the Gods the seed of a mighty woe ?  
 For Troy's proud sons and Achaia's host will he straightway forsake, 135  
 And will come upon us, and the heaven with the storm of his coming shall shake,  
 And on one after other, on guilty and guiltless, his hands will he lay.  
 Then thy wrath for thy stalwart son put thou at my bidding away.  
 For many an one that in might of his hands is stronger than he  
 Hath been slain, or in days to come shall be slain ; hard task shall it be 140

The race and the seed of all mankind from their doom to free."

So spake she, and caused fierce Arès to sit on his throne once more.

But Hêrê hath called Apollo without the feast-hall door,

And Iris, the messenger speeding the deathless Gods between :

And she uttered the winged word-flight, and spake the Olympian Queen : 145

" Zeus biddeth that ye unto Ida shall fare with your uttermost speed ;

And when ye shall come, and shall look on the face of Kronos' seed,

Whatsoever he biddeth you, do, and give to his hest good heed."

So spake she, the Lady Hêrê, and backward turned her again,

And she sat on her throne : but downward darting flew those twain. 150

And to Ida the fountain-flashing, the mother of beasts of the wold,

Came they, and seated on Gargarus' crest did their eyes behold

Kronion, and round him the wreath of a fragrant cloud was rolled.

So they came to the presence of Zeus the Cloudrack-herder, and stood :

And he beholding them there was nowise wrathful of mood 155

That so swiftly they hearkened the hest that was borne by the wife of their lord.

And to Iris he turned him first, and he uttered the swift-winged word :

" Speed thee away, swift Iris, and unto Poseidon the King

Bear all this message from me : thou shalt hide not anything.

Thou bid that he cease from the war, and let the battle be, 160

And depart to the tribes of the Gods, or into the sacred sea.

But and if he will disobey my word, and will none of mine hest,

Then let him bethink him, and weigh this well in the thoughts of his breast.

Lest, be he never so strong, he endure not my coming to war,

Forasmuch as in might I declare of a truth I am stronger far, 165

And the elder-born. But his reckless heart giveth place unto pride,  
To account himself my peer, who am dreaded of all beside."

So spake he, and wind-footed Iris the swift disobeyed him not,  
But down from the mountains of Ida to Ilium the holy she shot.  
And even as when from the clouds cometh flying the snow or the hail, 170  
Chill-drifting by upon welkin-begotten Boreas' gale,  
So swiftly Iris the fleet, the eager-hurrying, sped ;  
And she came to the side of the glorious Shaker of Earth, and she said :

"With a certain message to thee, O Girder of Earth dark-haired,  
Hitherward from the presence of Zeus the Aegis-lord have I fared. 175  
He biddeth thee cease from the war, and let the battle be,  
And depart to the tribes of the Gods, or into the sacred sea.  
But and if thou wilt none of his hest, if his word thou wilt disobey,  
Himself, he doth threaten, to match his might against thine in the fray,  
Will hitherward come :—but he biddeth thee shrink from the trial of war 180  
With his hands, forasmuch as he saith that in strength he is mightier far.  
And the elder-born. But thy reckless heart giveth place unto pride,  
To account thyself his peer, who is dreaded of all beside."

And the glorious Shaker of Earth spake indignation-stirred :  
"Out on it!—strong though he be, overweening was this his word, 185  
If by force he will curb in mine own despite his peer, even me!  
Three brethren begotten of Kronos, of Rhea born, were we :  
Even Zeus, and myself, and Hades the Netherworld King, she bare.  
And divided were all things in three, and for each was an honour-share.  
And my lot, as we shook the urn, was for aye in the kingdom to dwell 190



Of the hoary sea ; and the murky gloom unto Hades fell ;  
 And Zeus amid welkin and cloud bare sway in the broad-arched heaven :  
 But for common possession to all was the earth and Olympus given.  
 Wherefore I nowise will walk by the mind of Zeus, but in peace,  
 Strong though he be, let him bide in his own third portion of these, 195  
 Neither look to affright me, like to a craven wretch, with his hands.  
 Better it were that he uttered with terrible threats his commands  
 Unto his daughters and sons, even them that be born of his seed :  
 For they will give ear to his hest, and obey him of sorest need."

But Iris the swift yet tarried, the Wind-foot spake the word : 200  
 "Is it even so, O Earth-enfolder, O dark-haired lord?  
 Must I bear this back unto Zeus—this speech unyielding and stern?  
 Or yet wilt thou turn and repent?—the hearts of the good can turn.  
 Thou knowest how still the Erinnyes wait on the elder in birth."

Then answered Poseidon, and spake yet again the Shaker of Earth : 205  
 "Iris, a word in season is this thou hast spoken to me.  
 Of a truth it is good when a messenger dealeth prudently.  
 But a terrible pang is this that mine heart and my spirit hath stung,  
 Whensoever he taketh upon him to chide with angry tongue  
 His equal in lot, whose fate in the self same balance is hung. 210  
 Yet, how indignant soe'er, will I bow to his hest this day.  
 But hearken to this my threat, to the word that in wrath I say :  
 If he, in despite of me and Athênê the Giver of Prey,  
 In despite of Hêrê and Hermes, and King Hephaistus withal  
 Shall spare steep Ilium-town, and shall not consent that she fall 215

In destruction, and not to the Argives the mighty triumph shall yield,  
This let him know, that the anger between us shall never be healed."

So spake he, the Shaker of Earth, and he left the Achaian host,  
And he plunged in the sea : sore lacked the heroes their champion lost.  
Then spake to Apollo Zeus, and the Cloudrack-gatherer said :

220

"Go now, dear Phoebus, to Hector the brazen-helmeted :  
For now is the Earth-enfolder, the Shaker of the Land,  
Gone back to the sacred sea, forasmuch as he dared not stand  
My swift wrath :—surely the others had heard the sound of our war,  
The Gods of the Underworld, in the dungeon of Kronos that are. 225  
But better by far was this for me and for him, I wot,  
That he shrank ere then, albeit his indignation was hot,  
From mine hands, for that not without sweat of our toil had the issue been  
But for thee, my tasselled aegis thou in thine hands shalt take : [wrought-  
This over the heroes Achaian, to daunt them withal, shalt thou shake. 230  
But let Hector the glorious, O Smiter from Far, be tended of thee.  
Rouse in him mighty strength, till the Argives, fast as they flee,  
Shall come unto Hellespont's stream, and the galleys fringing the sea ;  
No longer—myself will by deed and by word take counsel then  
How the Achaians may breathe from their battle-toil again." 235

He spake, and Apollo hearkened his father's bidding to do,  
And adown from the ridges of Ida in shape of a falcon he flew,  
The swift one, the slayer of doves, which is fleetest of all winged kind.  
And Hector the godlike, the offspring of Priam the wise, did he find,  
Sitting—no more was he lying, but only rewaking as yet 240

Was his spirit : his comrades he knew ; but the gasping and agony-sweat  
 Was stayed ; for the purpose revived him of Zeus the Aegis-lord.  
 Then stood by his side Far-smiter Apollo, and spake the word :

“ Hector thou child of Priam, now wherefore aloof from the rest  
 All faint dost thou sit ?—is it so, that thy spirit is trouble-oppressed ? ” 245

Spake Hector faintly and feebly, the prince of the tossing crest :  
 “ And thou, O mightiest of Gods, who dost question me, who art thou ?  
 Hast thou heard not how by the rearward galleys Achaian but now,  
 As I slaughtered his comrades, Aias the mighty in battle-aid  
 With a great stone hurled at my breast, that my fury of onset was stayed ? 250  
 Yea, and I thought that adown to the dead I should fare this day,  
 And the mansion of Hades, when I had gasped my life away.”

Then unto him did the King, Far-smiter Apollo, say :  
 “ Now be of good cheer, so mighty a champion Kronion doth send  
 From Ida to stand by thy side in the midst of the strife, and defend, 255  
 Even Phoebus Apollo with Sword of Gold, who in days gone by  
 Have warded thy life and thy city builded steep and high.  
 Now cheer thou onward the host of thy car-borne warriors to speed  
 Down on the hollow galleys the fleetfoot chariot-steed.  
 And before thee will I pass on : I will make smooth all the way 260  
 For the steeds, back turning the heroes Achaian in disarray.”

Then into the shepherd of folk did he breathe great might for the fray.  
 As a stallion manger-fed that hath snapped his halter in twain,  
 And speedeth with thunder of galloping feet far over the plain  
 To plunge, as so oft he hath plunged, in the river lovely-gleaming 265

Exulting ; and proudly he beareth his head, and his mane outstreaming  
Floateth his shoulders around, as in pride of his goodlihead  
By swift knees borne to the pastures and herds of the mares he had sped ;  
So Hector with lightsome feet and with lithe knees swiftly trod,  
On-cheering the horsemen, so soon as he hearkened the voice of the God. 270  
And even as country-folk follow fast with the deep-voiced pack  
Of their hounds on the flight of an antlered stag or a wild goat's track,  
Till the crags of the rocks unfooted, the brakes of the forest-gloom,  
Have delivered the prey, because not yet was the day of its doom ;  
Then at their outcry appeareth a lion of stormy mane 275  
In the way, back turning them all, though never so eager-fain :  
Even so for a season the dense-thronged Danaan men followed fierce  
With swinging blades and with vengeful thrust of the two-headed spears :  
But so soon as they looked upon Hector ranging from rank unto rank,  
They quaked, and the hearts of them all to their very feet down sank. 280

Then Thoas the son of Andraimon spake to the rest his rede,  
Chiefest of all the Aetolians, cunning the javelin to speed,  
And good in the standing fight, and in speech-craft few of the sons  
Of Achaia o'ermatched him, when strove in the council their mighty ones ;  
And thus, of his will for their welfare, amidst of them all spake he : 285

“ Lo now, 'tis a marvel of marvels, the thing with mine eyes that I see,  
In what wise he hath risen again, yon Hector, escaping his fate !  
Of a truth was the expectation of each man's heart full great  
That our foe by the hands of Aias Telamon's son had died.  
Yet again some God hath delivered him, turning the doom aside 290



From Hector, from him who hath loosed many Danaan knees ere now,  
 As again it shall be, I fear me, for not without sanction, I trow,  
 Of Thunderer Zeus in the forefront of battle thus doth he storm!  
 But come now, as I shall counsel, so hearken we all to perform :—  
 Bid we the common throng turn back to the galleys again ; 295  
 But for us, even all in the host who boast us of noblest strain,  
 Stand we, if haply we first, as we face him, may thrust him aback  
 Outstretching our spears :—grim terror, I trow, shall yet make slack  
 The heart fierce-straining to plunge mid the Danaan battle-wrack !"

So did he say, and they heard and obeyed him with eager mood. 300  
 Round Aias they closed, and with King Idomeneus stoutly they stood,  
 And with Teucer and Mëriones and with Meges the War-god's peer.  
 And they marshalled the fight, and rang to the champions Achaian their cheer  
 As they fronted the Trojans and Hector, the while to rearward afar  
 Streamed back to Achaia's galleys their multitude from the war. 305

Onward the Trojans hurled in a dense throng : Hector led  
 With long swift strides, and before him Phoebus Apollo sped  
 With cloud-veiled shoulders : the stormily-rushing Aegis he bore,  
 Dread, shaggily tassel-begirt, far-gleaming, fashioned of yore  
 By the God-smith Hephaistus for Zeus, to thrill men's hearts with dismay : 310  
 High lifting the same in his hands he led the folk to the fray.  
 And the Argives abode them, a serried battalion, and loud 'gan ring  
 From host unto host the yells wild-shrilling : sprang from the string  
 The arrows, and many a lance from the dauntless hands 'gan leap :  
 Some into the flesh of warriors battle-swift plunged deep, 315

And into the earth sank many, or ever their flight might attain  
The goal of their flesh ; and they quivered athirst for the blood of the slain.

While yet in Apollo's hands that Aegis moveless hung,  
Fast fell the folk as the shafts from host unto host were flung.  
But when on the fleet-horsed Danaans face to face he gazed, 320  
And shook it, and mightily shouted withal, their souls were amazed  
Within their breasts, that they wholly forgot their onset-might.  
And as when from two fierce beasts in the dead of the black dark night  
A herd of kine, or the sheep of a great flock, huddling fly,  
As suddenly come the spoilers when warder is none thereby ; 325  
So spiritless fled the Achaians, for Phoebus shot dismay  
Through their hearts, and vouchsafed renown unto Hector and Troy that day.  
Then man slew man when rent was the battle's serried array.  
Stichius and Arkesilaüs withal did Hector slay,  
This leading Bœotians brazen-corsleted battleward hied, 330  
That, mighty-hearted Menestheus' comrade true and tried.  
From Iasus and Medon Aeneas the spoils blood-crimsoned won.  
Of Oïleus the godlike was Medon begotten, a handmaid's son,  
And was brother to Aias, but far from his fatherland-home had he gone  
In Phylakê-land to abide, because he had spilled the life 335  
Of the kinsman of Queen Eriôpis, his sire Oïleus' wife.  
And the children of Athens on to the war did Iasus lead :  
Men called him the scion of Sphêlus, Boukolus' princely seed.  
Polydamas smiteth Mekistes, Polites hath Echius slain  
In the forefront of fight, and Agênor the godlike is Klonius' bane. 340

And at Deiochus' back 'neath the shoulders his javelin Paris threw,  
As he turned mid the forefighters flightward, and drave the brass clear through.

Now it was so, that while they spoiled these slain of their battle-gear,  
Dashed through the deep-delved trench and the palisade-stakes in their fear,  
Scattered this way and that, the Achaians, swept by the rout through the wall ;  
Then with a mighty shout on the Trojans did Hector call : [345

“On ! charge ye down on the ships !—let be the spoils blood-dyed !  
Whomsoever I mark from the galleys aloof on the farther side,  
I will surely devise his death : not him shall his kinsmen lay,  
Nor his kinswomen, high on the pyre, nor the honour of flame shall they pay,  
But before our town shall he lie, and the dogs shall devour the prey !” [350

He spake, and his car-steeds' shoulders with scourge fierce-stinging he lashed,  
Shouting adown the ranks of the Trojans. Behind him they dashed  
With one wild cheer, on-driving the steed and the thundering car  
With yelling unearthly, and Phoebus Apollo afront of their war 355  
Spurned down with his feet full lightly the banks of the deep-delved fosse ;  
To the midst thereof did he cast them, and bridged a pathway across  
Full broad and long : it was wide as the space that a lance's flight  
May attain, when the hurler thereof maketh uttermost proof of his might.  
Therethrough in their squadrons they poured ; with the Aegis far-renowned 360  
Apollo went ever before. Full lightly he dashed to the ground  
The rampart Achaiar, as when some child at his sport on the strand  
Upbuildeth him after his childish wit his castles of sand,  
And scattereth anon and confoundeth with wanton foot and hand ;  
So, Archer Phoebus, the toil and the travail didst thou confound 365

Of the Argive men, and their hearts with a panic of fear didst astound.  
So by the galleys they stayed them, so turned they there to bay,  
Each cheering his fellow on, and to all the Gods 'gan pray ;  
Each with uplifting of hands full earnestly made his request ;  
And Gerenian Nestor, Achaia's warder, above the rest

370

Prayed, as on high to the star-studded heaven he stretched his hand :

“ Zeus, Father, if ever in Argos the corn-abounding land

We prayed, as the fat of the steer or the sheep rose upward in flame

To return, and thou promisedst, bending thy brows for a pledge of the same,

Remember, Olympian, and oh from the pitiless day shield us !

375

Beneath their Trojan foes bow not the Achaians thus !”

So spake he in prayer : loud thundered the Counsel-king from on high,  
Giving ear to the pleading of Neleus' son, to the ancient's cry.

But when heard was the crash of the Aegis-lord by the warriors of Troy,

More fiercely they rushed on the Argives, afire with the battle-joy.

380

And as over a galley's bulwarks out on the great wide sea

Bursteth a mountain wave, when the huddling surges flee

From the stress of the wind which uplifteth the waves most mightily ;

So down on the rampart the Trojans burst with a great war-cry : [thereby 385

Their chariots they drave through the breach to the sterns, and they battled

Stabbing with two-headed spears, high-borne on their chariots these,

But those to the decks of their dark-hulled galleys have sprung, and they seize

The pikes long-shafted that lie on the planks thereof ready-dight

In massy length upon length, brass-headed, for sea-tossed fight.

Now Patroclus, so long as the battle-surge of the Trojans beat

390



On Achaia's rampart, but won not yet to the ships of the fleet,  
 In the tent of Eurypylus courteous-souled so long did he stay,  
 And cheered him with speech of his lips, and healing balms did he lay  
 On his grievous wound, to charm the anguish thereof away.  
 But when he was ware how the Trojans stormed o'er the rampart's height, 395  
 And a shriek from the Danaans rose and a panic of sore affright,  
 Then loud did he wail in his grief, and he smote upon either thigh  
 With the palms of his hands, and he spake with a lamentable cry :

“ Eurypylus, here no longer, how sore soever thy need,  
 May I stay, for a mighty strife hath arisen in very deed. 400

But thee let thine henchman comfort, but as for me, I will go  
 To Achilles in haste, to enkindle the hero to face the foe.  
 Who can tell but he haply will hearken, but God will cause him to heed  
 My pleading ?—a blessing there is when the lips of the loving plead !”

So spake he, and hasted his feet. Not a man of Achaia quailed 405  
 From the onset of Troy the while : howbeit they nowise prevailed  
 From the galleys to thrust their foes, albeit the fewer they were ;  
 And never the Trojans might rend their battalions asunder, and bear  
 The Danaans back where the lines of the tents and the ships were arrayed :  
 But as when to the planks of a galley the measuring-line is laid 410

In the hands of a cunning craftsman, whose spirit Athênê doth fill  
 By the might of her inspiration with wisdom and manifold skill,  
 So level-strained was the battle, and swerved not to left nor to right  
 While round this galley and that roared ever the storm of the fight.

Then Hector at Aias the battle-renowned rushed onward amain ; 415

And about one ship had they toil of the strife, but they might not attain—

Hector, to drive back Aias, and wrap the galleys in flame,

Nor Aias to thrust back Hector, since spurred by a God he came.

Then Aias the glorious hurled at Kalêtor, Klytius' son,

As he bare to a galley his torch, and the lance to the breast of him won ; 420

Down-crashing he fell, and out of his hand was the firebrand whirled.

And when Hector beheld with his eyes his cousin earthward hurled,

And afront of the black ship lying in dust bereft of life,

To the Trojans and Lycians he cried with a great voice cleaving the strife :

“Trojans and Lycians and Dardans that close in the grapple of fight, 425

Not yet give back from the battle in this our desperate plight,

But rescue the scion of Klytius ; let not his harness be spoiled

By Achaïans, who fell mid the host of the ships as in battle he toiled !”

So did he cry, and at Aias his glittering javelin he threw ;

Yet he missed him, but onward at Lykophron Mastor's son it flew— 430

A Kythêran, the henchman of Aias, who dwelt in the island-home

Of the prince : from Kythêra the hallowed he fled from the manslayer's doom ;—

To his head did the keen brass leap, and above the ear it passed

As by Aias he stood : to the earth from the stern of the ship was he cast,

That in dust on his back, with his strong limbs palsy-stricken, he lay : 435

Then Aias shuddered, and cried on his brother, and thus did he say :

“Teucer, beloved one, slain is our comrade, the true and the tried,

Mastor's son, from Kythêra who came in our halls to abide,

And like unto them that had borne us had worship and love of our hearts.

Him Hector the mighty-hearted hath slain !—where now be thy darts, 440

Winged speeders of death, and the gift of Phoebus Apollo, thy bow?"

He spake, and his brother gave heed, and ran, and he faced the foe  
At his side, with the back-springing bow and the quiver arrow-fraught  
Grasped in his hand : right swiftly his shafts at the Trojans he shot.  
And at Kleitus the glorious son of Peisênor a shaft did he speed,— 445

Comrade was he of Polydamas Panthoüs' haughty seed—  
As he swayed in his hands the reins, as onward his horses he lashed,  
As he hurled them where thickest the meeting battalions in battle-shock clashed,  
For a grace to the Trojans and Hector—but suddenly came his bane :  
There was none of them all might deliver him, yea, were they never so fain, 450  
When the arrow of anguish into the back of his neck plunged deep.

From his chariot he fell, and aside did the frightened car-steeds leap ;  
And the masterless chariot was reeling :—but prince Polydamas spied  
Swiftly, and foremost of all afront of the steeds did he stride.  
These did he give to Astynouïs' hand, Protiaion's son, 455

And straitly he charged him to rein them hard by his side, and look on,  
But into the forefront of battle the hero himself is gone.

Then Teucer at Hector the brass-mailed aimed yet again the flight  
Of an arrow ; and now by Achaia's ships had he quelled the fight,  
Had he smitten and reft his life amidst his triumphant toil. 460

But he 'scaped not the all-wise spirit of Zeus, who warded the while  
Hector, and robbed of renown Telamonian Teucer's hand ;  
For he suddenly snapped the deftly-twisted cord that spanned  
That flawless bow, as he drew it : aside did the foiled shaft slip,  
Even the brass-heavy arrow, and dropped the bow from his grip. 465

And Teucer shuddered, and cried to his brother, and thus spake he :

“Out on it!—surely a God is ruining utterly

Our counsels of war, forasmuch as my bow from mine hand he hath cast,

And hath snapped the cord new-twisted, the which myself made fast

This morn, that its strength should the storm of the swift-thronging arrows

Unto him did Aias the mighty, Telamon's son, reply : [outlast.” 470

“O brother, yet leave thou the bow and the host of thine arrows to lie,

Which a God hath in jealousy marred, to confound the Achaians thereby.

But thy long spear grasp in thine hand, and cast on thy shoulders the targe,

And fight with the foe, and the rest of the folk cheer on to the charge. 475

Sore toil shall they have, though a moment they triumph, to win for a prey

The fair-benched ships!—now let us awaken the joy of the fray.”

He spake, and that other laid aside in his tent the bow,

And about his shoulders the fence of the fourfold shield did he throw,

And a fair-wrought helmet he drew down over his gallant head ; 480

Terribly nodded the crest with the dark mane overshadowed.

And a mighty spear, with the brass keen-pointed, he grasped in his hand,

And he hied him and ran, and with speed by Aias' side did he stand.

Now when Hector was ware of the foiling of Teucer's shafts of war,

To the Trojans and Lycians he cried with a great voice pealing afar : 485

“Trojans and Lycians and Dardans that close in the grapple of fight,

Quit you like men, my friends, and remember the storm of your might

Here by the hollow ships, for now have mine eyes beheld

How a champion's shafts by the touch of the hand of Zeus have been quelled.

Full easily Zeus's help to the children of men shall be known, 490



Whether to them upon whom he bestoweth triumph-renown,  
 Or whomso he minisheth, bringing them low, and will nowise defend ;  
 As now he doth minish the Argives' might, and us doth befriend.  
 Fight on !—close up to the ships !—fight on !—whosoe'er of you all,  
 Smit by a dart or stabbed, on his death and his doom shall fall, 495  
 E'en let him die ! No shadow of shame toucheth him who shall die  
 Defending his land, but his wife, but his babes shall be saved thereby,  
 And his home and his acres unharried shall bide, if Achaia's array  
 To their own dear fatherland-shore in the galleys shall flee away."

So spake he, and kindled their courage, and each man's heart beat high. 500  
 But overagainst them did Aias the while to his war-fellows cry :

" Shame, Argives !—now is it fixed and sure : ye must either be slain,  
 Or be saved alive by thrusting aback from your galleys their bane.  
 What, hope ye, if Hector the stormy-crested shall win that spoil,  
 That walking the waves ye shall fare each man to your fatherland-soil ? 505  
 What, hear ye him not on-cheering the host in his fierce desire,  
 Yon Hector, as madly he yearneth to burn the galleys with fire ?  
 It is not to the dance, but the fight, that he biddeth them thus, I wis !  
 But for us, no thought shall be better, no counsel more goodly than this,  
 Hand against hand and might against might to close in the strife : 510  
 Better that all in a moment we perish or win us our life,  
 Than long to be straitened sore in the terrible battle-strain  
 Here at the hands of men that be viler, and all in vain."

So speaking he kindled the heart and the courage of every one.  
 Then Hector laid low Schedius, lord Perimêdes' son, 515

Chief of the Phocians ; and Aias smote Laodamas down,  
A captain of footmen, Antenor's scion, a man of renown.  
And Polydamas smote a lord of Kyllênê, Otus, dead,  
Phyleides' companion, the mighty-hearted Epeians who led.  
But Meges beheld it, and rushed on him. Crouching the death to shun, 520  
Polydamas 'scaped, that he missed ; for Apollo forbade that the son  
Of Panthoüs there should be stricken and slain in the forefront of fight.  
But full on the midst of Kroismus' breast did the lance-head light.  
Down crashed he : but even as the victor was stripping the battle-gear [spear,—  
From his shoulders, there sprang on him Dolops full cunning in craft of the  
Which was born to the son of Laomedon, Lampus, a prince among men,—  
Right cunning in craft of the furious fight : on rushed he then,  
And he closed with Phyleus' son, and amidst of his buckler he smote  
With his lance, but the thrust was foiled by his strong-wrought brazen coat,  
Whose welded plates ensheathed him, the corslet brought of old 530  
By Phyleus from Ephyрэ-land, where the river Sellêis rolled.  
At the hands of his bond-friend, Euphêtes the king, that gift had he ta'en,  
To bear it to war, a defence from his foes in the battle-strain ;  
And the flesh of his son in the perilous hour it warded from bane.  
At his helmet of brass, as it lightened beneath the cloudy mane, 535  
Even at the top of the crest, with his keen lance Meges thrust,  
Shearing the horse-hair plume from the socket : to earth amid dust  
Fell all that splendour of fresh-dyed purple, a crimson flame.  
But while yet he withstood him, and battled, and hoped for the victory-fame,  
Even then to the help of his foe Menelaus the champion came 540

Unmarked : on his flank he stood ; at his shoulder he hurled from the rear,  
 And cleàn through the breast of him darted the point of the furious spear  
 On-speeding, and forward reeling fell on his face the slain ;

And to strip from his shoulders his brazen harness rushed those twain.

But to all his brethren Hector the rescue-challenge cried : 545

Hiketaon's son, Melanippus the stalwart, first did he chide—

Now the man had been wont to pasture the herds of his trailfoot kine

In Perkôtê, while tarried the foemen yet far over the brine :

But so soon as the wave-rocked Danaan ships on the coast swooped down,

Unto Ilium he went, and was great mid the Trojans, a man of renown, 550

And with Priam abode, and was honoured even as a son of the king :

Upon his name Hector cried, and loud did his chiding ring :

“Ho thus, Melanippus, shall we wax slack?—is the heart of thee now

Moved not for thy kin, nor regardeth that low in the dust he should bow?

Seest thou not how from Dolops they rend his harness of war? 555

On then, let us close with the foe—we may fight no more from afar—

Till we smite yon Argives and slay, or in ruin strown on the plain

Be Ilium's crest of towers, and the folk of our city be slain.”

He spake, and the onset he led ; fast followed the godlike wight.

But the Argives by great Telamonian Aias were cheered to the fight : 560

“Friends, quit you like men, and for shame let not your hearts wax cold!

Think scorn in the fight to be craven, for friends that your deeds behold!

For of such as think scorn to flee more live than be slain in the strife ;

But the fleer is fameless, yea, and he shall not deliver his life.”

So spake he, but they unbidden were fain to withstand their foes, 565

Yet they laid up his words in their hearts, and before the ships did they close  
In a brazen battle-hedge. Zeus kindled the Trojan men.

To Antilochus-cried Menelaus the battle-helper then :

“Antilochus, younger than thou there is none the Achaians among,  
Neither any so swift of his feet, neither any in battle so strong. 570  
Leap forth from the press, and smite some man mid the Trojan throng.”

He spake, and was gone, but his word had enkindled Antilochus' heart.  
From the forefighters forward he leapt, and his glittering spear did he dart,  
Warily glancing around : back shrank the Trojans adread  
From the cast of the hero's lance, neither vainly its lightning was sped ; 575  
But it smote Melanippus the haughty-souled, Hiketaon's son ;  
For, as fightward he turned, to his breast by the nipple the swift death won.  
Down crashed he, and over his eyeballs death's black veil was drawn.  
But Antilochus leapt on the slain, as a hound on a stricken fawn  
Darteth, a fawn which even as it sprang from its couch fern-hung, 580  
A hunter hath shot with his shaft, that the strength of its limbs is unstrung ;  
So leapt, Melanippus, on thee battle-bider Antilochus then  
Of thine harness to spoil thee, but 'scaped not godlike Hector's ken,  
For running to meet him athwart the turmoil of war did he pass.  
But Antilochus bode not his onset, warrior swift though he was ; 585  
But he shrank, as a beast of the wold, which hath wrought some deed of bane,  
By the which some hound, or a herdman in warding his kine hath been slain,  
Fleeth, or ever the throng of avengers be gathered anigh ;  
So the Nestorid shrank, and behind him Hector with them of Troy,  
Hurling with yellings unearthly the bitter shafts, swept on, 590



But he turned him to bay, and he stood, to the throng of his friends when he

But the Trojans like unto ravening lions onward pressed [won.

Storming the galleys, the while they accomplished Zeus's behest.

For he roused great might in them ever, the Argives' spirit he stilled

With a spell, and he stole their renown, and their foes with fury he filled. 595

For he purposed to give unto Hector the Priamid victory-fame

Until on the beakèd galleys the tireless-blazing flame

He should hurl, and his wildfire should Thetis' presumptuous prayer fulfil

To the utmost : for this was the Counsel-father tarrying still,

Even to behold with his eyes the glare of a galley ablaze : 600

But from that time forth would he turn the Trojans in backward chase

From the ships, and vouchsafe to the Danaan champions glory's meed.

With suchlike intent he enkindled Hector Priam's seed

By the hollow ships, who himself was keen theretofore for the deed.

Mad raged he as Arês the Shaker of Spears, or as mad flames leap 605

Wild-wasting from hill unto hill in the folds of a forest deep.

And the foam-froth fringed his lips, and from under his eyebrows grim

Flashed forth his blazing eyes, and around the temples of him

The lightnings that leapt from his dancing helmet fearfully played,

For that Zeus himself from the heaven bent down for Hector's aid, 610

And he crowned him with honour and glory, him only, and none beside

Of the thousands there, for doomed were the hours of his life to abide

But a short span yet, for that Pallas Athênê was hastening on

The day of his death and his doom by the hand of Peleus' son.

Fain was he to rend asunder their ranks, and he made assay 615

Where glittered the goodliest harness, the throng stood densest at bay ;  
Yet not even so, how eager soe'er, might he cleave their array.  
Firm-massed as a fortress-tower they abode, or a cliff steep-browed,  
A giant crag, by the which the grey sea murmureth loud,  
Which abideth the whirlwind-ridden paths of the blasts wild-yelling, 620  
And the onward-storming roar of the rollers mountain-swelling ;  
Even so shrank none of the Danaan men, but firm did they stand.  
But flashing with flame through the throng rushed Hector on every hand,  
And he burst on them like as a wave swift-rushing beneath black clouds, [625  
Heaved huge by the winds, bursts down on a ship, and the wild foam shrouds  
From the stem to the stern her hull, and the storm-blast's terrible breath  
Roars in the sail, and the heart of the shipmen shuddereth  
In fear, for that scanty upborne are they now from the clutches of death ;  
Even so were the hearts in the bosoms Achaian anguish-rent.  
But the hero, as cometh on kine a lion with fell intent, 630  
As they graze, when the low-lying land of a wide-spread marsh is filled  
With their thousands, and mid them the herdman goeth, as yet unskilled  
To battle with ravening beasts for the blood of his kine athirst ;  
But now with the rearward kine is he lagging, and now with the first  
Presseth onward, the while that lion hath leapt on the midst of the herd 635  
And devoureth a heifer, while all else flee ; so panic-stirred  
Full strangely by Hector and Father Zeus the Achaian array  
All fled, but Mycêné's son Periphêtes alone did he slay,  
Even Kopreus' dear-loved child, who was wont, time was, to fare  
From Eurystheus the king, unto Hêrakles' might his bidding to bear. 640

Far meaner was Kopreus the sire, but the son had goodlier might  
 In all manner of prowess, in fleetness of foot, and in cunning of fight,  
 And in wisdom of counsel was even as the chief of Mycéné's men ;  
 Even he unto Hector yielded the glory of mastery then.  
 For, even as he turned him aback, on his shield-rim stumbling he reeled, 645  
 For his targe to his feet reached down, his life from the darts to shield :  
 Thereby was he foiled, that he fell on his back, and terribly clashed  
 The helmet his temples ensheathing, as down on the earth he was dashed.  
 And Hector with keen glance marked him, and ran and stood by his side,  
 And plunged through his breast his lance, that in sight of his comrades he died.  
 Anguished were they for their friend, yet they might not avail for his aid, [650  
 Forasmuch as themselves of Hector the godlike were sore afraid.

And now were they overagainst the galleys ; on each side rose  
 The sterns of the uppermost line : still on like a flood came their foes.  
 Then from the foremost ships drew back in their own despite 655  
 The Argives, howbeit beside the tents they abode the fight [and fear  
 Close-thronged, neither broke they to flee through the camp, for that shame  
 Withheld them, and each unto each cried ever a word of cheer.

And Nestor, Achaia's warder, most for their rallying wrought, [660  
 And by them that had borne him adjured each man, and with prayers besought :

“ Friends, quit you like men !—take shame to your souls because of the eyes  
 Of others beholding !—in each man's heart let remembrance arise  
 Of children and wives and possessions and them that gave him birth,  
 Whether yet your belovèd live, or have perished by this from the earth.  
 For their sake now I beseech you, by them that are not in your sight, 665

That ye dauntlessly stand, that ye turn not backward in craven flight !”

So speaking he kindled their courage, their hearts to the onset leapt ;  
And the wondrous cloud of mist from their eyes Athênê swept ;

And exceeding clear upon either hand shone forth the light

Here, on the galleys, and there on the swaying surges of fight. 670

And Hector they saw, and the host that battle-helper brought ;

Yea, marked whosoever to rearward loitered, and nowise fought,

And whoso beside the galleys in toil of the battle wrought.

Nor now to the spirit of great-heart Aias did this seem good

To stand where backward driven the sons of Achaia stood ; 675

But with long swift strides on the decks of the ships to and fro did he spring,

And a great sea-battle pike in his death-dealing hands did he swing

Of cubits twenty and two, firm-clamped with many a ring.

And even as when some man that on horses is cunning to ride

Hath ta'en four steeds from the herd, and hath harnessed them side by side,

And darting away from the plain to a great town fast doth he race [680

Thundering down the highway, and many behold with amaze,

Both menfolk and women ; and swiftly and sure evermore at his will

Changing from horse unto horse doth he bound, and they fly on still ;

So Aias from deck unto deck of many a swift ship sprang 685

With long swift strides to and fro, and his voice to the heavens rang ;

And with great and terrible shout to the Danaans ever he cried

To fight for the tents and the ships. Yea, neither did Hector abide

In the midst of the strong-mailed Trojans, to shrink from the onset-shock ;

But as swoopeth a tawny eagle adown on a feathered flock 690



Of the fowl of the air, where floweth a river through some green mead,  
 Swoopeth on geese, or on cranes, or the long-necked swans as they feed ;  
 So Hector full on a galley whose prow rose dark from the strand  
 Darted unswerving : behind, with exceeding mighty hand  
 Zeus thrust him on, and the battle-fire of his comrades he fanned. 695  
 So by the galleys again awoke that battle grim.  
 Thou hadst said that with toil unspent, and all unwasted of limb,  
 They closed in the grapple of war, so fiercely they rushed to the fray.  
 And thus were their thoughts in the battle—the men of Achaia's array  
 Deemed they should never escape, but should fall by the hands of the foe. 700  
 But the heart in the breast of every Trojan with hope was aglow  
 Of burning the ships, and of spilling Achaian heroes' life :  
 Even such was their mood as each against other they stood in the strife.  
 Then on the stern of a sea-borne ship laid Hector his hand,  
 A fair swift cleaver of brine, which had borne to the Trojan land 705  
 Protesilaüs, but ne'er to his fatherland brought him again :  
 Even around his ship the Achaian and Trojan men  
 Closed hand to hand in the grapple, and slew. None held him apart  
 To abide afar from the leap of the arrow, the rush of the dart : [710  
 Nay, man against man did they range them, and one was their dauntless mood,  
 And ever with keen-edged bills and with huge war-axes they hewed,  
 And with great swords lashed they and lunged, and with spears two-headed  
 And black-sheathed hilted falchions many an one to the dust [they thrust,  
 Fell, some from their hands, and some, while battled man against man,  
 With the arms from the shoulders hewn, and with blood the dark earth ran. 715

But when Hector had gript that stern, from its ensign he loosed not his hold,  
And over the Trojan ranks his voice's thunder rolled :

“Bring fire, and with one voice now send up your shout to the heaven !  
This day, this crown of our days, lo, Zeus unto us hath given  
To win yon ships, which came in the Gods' despite, and here 720  
Wreaked on us manifold scathe, through the graybeards' craven fear :  
For they, when to fight by the sterns of the galleys my spirit was fain,  
Ever withheld me therefrom, and the folk did they still restrain.  
Ha, but if far-seeing Zeus in that day blinded our eyes,  
Himself now speedeth us on, and he biddeth us take the prize !” 725

Then rushed they against the Argives with fury more fierce than before,  
But Aias was sorely bestead by the darts, that he bode them no more,  
But backward a little he drew, foreboding death in his heart,  
From the deck of the shapely ship to a seven-foot rowers' thwart ;  
There stood he with eyes keen-watching, and aye as the Trojans came, 730  
Beat back whosoe'er to the galleys was bearing the tireless flame ;  
And aye to the Danaan men rang forth his terrible shout :

“O friends, O Danaan heroes, the War-god's henchmen stout,  
Quit you like men, my friends, and remember your stormy might !  
What, do ye deem there be helpers to rearward yet of the fight, 735  
Or a stronger-built wall, that our doom should be hurled back thence ?  
Now nay, no city is nigh girt round with its tower-fence  
To defend us, and turn with the host of her people the battle's scale.  
But since in the plain of the Trojans, the warriors sheathed in mail,  
With our backs to the sea we be set from our fatherland-soil afar, 740

In our hands is the light of salvation, and nowise in slackness in war!"

He spake, and with eager fury he charged with the keen-whetted spear.  
And whatso warrior of Troy to the hollow ships drew near  
With devouring fire, for a kindness to Hector the kindler of fight,  
Him Aias met with the pike long-shafted, and stabbed forthright :  
So in front of the ships twelve foes did his hands death-dealing smite.

BOOK XVI.

*How Patroclus amidst of his glory was slain of a God and a Hero.*

**S**O round that fair-benched galley the surges of battle broke.  
But Patroclus came and stood by Achilles the shepherd of folk,  
Fast-shedding the hot-gushing tears, as adown from a rugged steep  
Forth of a sunless well-spring the dusky waters leap.

And fleetfoot Achilles the godlike beheld him pity-stirred ; 5  
And he lifted his voice unto him, and he uttered the light-winged word :

“ Why art thou weeping, Patroclus, as weepeth a fond little maid  
By her mother that runneth, and prayeth the while in her arms to be laid,  
And she stayeth her hurrying feet with the fingers that cling to her gown, [10  
And with tear-swimming eyes looketh up till the cradling arms reach down ?  
Thou art shedding, Patroclus, the weakling’s tear-drops even as she.  
Dost thou bring any tale to the Myrmidon folk, any word unto me ?  
Or what, hast thou heard any tidings from Phthia-land, thou alone ?  
Still of the living, they say, is Menoitius, Aktor’s son :  
Still mid the Myrmidon folk liveth Peleus, Aiakus’ seed. 15



For these, if they haply had died, should we grieve in very deed.  
 Or what, dost thou mourn for the Argive men, beholding them slain  
 By the hollow ships, whose transgression alone hath wrought their bane?  
 Speak out, hide it not in thine heart, that thy grief may be known of twain."

Then heavily groaning thou spakest, Patroclus lord of the car : 20

"O scion of Peleus, Achilles, Achaia's mightiest far,

Be not indignant : by pain so sore is Achaia oppressed.

For all her champions, they that in days overpast were her best,

Lie mid the ships spear-stricken or smitten by arrow-flight.

Shaft-stricken is Tydeus' son, Diomedes the stalwart in fight : 25

Spear-stabbed is Odysseus, and King Agamemnon the spear-renowned.

Yea, there is Eurypylus laid, for an arrow his thigh hath found.

And the leeches cunning in salves for their helping play their part,

Healing their hurts : but, Achilles, as adamant hard is thine heart.

Ah, never be such wrath mine as thou dost nurse in thy breast, 30

O balefully brave!—what man of the days unborn shall be blest

In thee, if thou stay not the ruin and shame in the Argives' need?

Ah ruthless! no father of thine was Peleus lord of the steed,

Neither Thetis thy mother!—the grey sea cast thee forth from her brine,

And the crags untrodden begat thee : a pitiless heart is thine ! 35

But and if 'tis a prophecy haunteth thy soul with a vision of fear,

If thy mother have told some fateful warning of Zeus in thine ear,

Yet in any wise speed me forth, and thy Myrmidons send to the war

With me, if I haply may rise on the host a deliverance-star.

And grant me to harness my shoulders with that thy battle-gear, 40

Peradventure the Trojans will think I am thou, and will shrink in their fear,  
And the warrior sons of Achaia shall win, when sore distressed,  
A breathing space, though scant be the battle's respite or rest.  
And we the unwearied shall drive the foe with the war-toil spent  
Lightly aback to the city afar from galley and tent." 45

So spake he in folly exceeding his prayer, for he asked therein  
Death for himself, and his weird was an evil doom to win.  
But answered him fleetfoot Achilles with sore disquiet stirred :

" Ah me, Zeus-born Patroclus, what ailed thee to say this word ?  
I heed not, if any I know, any oracle uttered of old, 50  
Nor yet hath my mother from Zeus unto me such warning told.  
But herein is mine heart's grim anguish, the pang of my spirit is here,  
That a man taketh on him to rob of his right his very peer,  
And to take back his guerdon, the token of might overpassing his own ;  
Yea, this is mine heart's grim anguish, the pang that my spirit hath known. 55  
The maid that Achaia's sons for my guerdon of war-renown  
Chose out, whom I won with my spear when I smote a fair-walled town,  
Even she from mine hands by Atreus' son Agamemnon is torn,  
As though I were naught but an alien wretch, a thing of scorn !  
But now will we suffer the past to be past : one may not for aye 60  
Nurse in his spirit a rancour undying : in sooth did I say  
That I would not refrain mine anger until at the last drew nigh  
Even to these my galleys the war and the battle-cry.  
But thou in my glorious harness of fight thy shoulders array,  
And lead my battle-revelling Myrmidons on to the fray, 65

If indeed the darkling cloud of the Trojans mightily  
 Hath encompassed the ships, the while, with their backs to the shore of the sea  
 The Argives reel, yet holding a scanty space of the land,  
 And against them the town of the Trojans is come in one great band  
 All fearless : for now they behold not my helmet's brow-plate gleam 70  
 Anigh them. Full soon in their flight should they choke each trenchèd stream  
 With their corpses, if only the soul of the lord Agamemnon would bow  
 To show kindness to me : but their battle hath compassed his army now.  
 For no more in the hands of Tydeus' son Diomedes the spear  
 Rageth to rescue the Danaan men from the doom drawn near ; 75  
 Nor yet have I heard the cry of Atreus' son ring out  
 From his hated head ; but only Hector the manslayer's shout,  
 On-cheering the Troyfolk, bursteth around, and with yell on yell  
 Throng they the plain, and in battle the sons of Achaia they quell.  
 Notwithstanding, Patroclus, to save yon galleys from ruin fell, 80  
 Charge mightily down, lest they burn the galleys with blazing fire,  
 And take our return away, and the day of our desire.  
 But obey thou, even as now I shall give in charge unto thee,  
 And so shalt thou win great honour and high renown for me  
 In the eyes of the Danaan host, and the maiden passing fair 85  
 Shall they take from the robber, and splendid gifts therewithal shall they bear.  
 When back from the ships thou hast hurled them, return : but if Hèrè's Lord,  
 If the Thunderer still with glory thy battle-prowess reward,  
 Not far from my side be thou furious-eager to fight with the foe,  
 With the war-fain heroes of Troy : thou shalt minish my glory so. 90

Neither in rapture of battle and revel of fight, while fall  
The Trojans before thee, lead thou on unto Ilium's wall,  
Lest one of the Gods everlasting should stoop from Olympus' height  
To meet thee—precious are they in Archer Apollo's sight:—  
But return, when amidst of the ships thou hast set the light of life, 95  
And leave unto these through the plain to toil and to bleed in the strife.  
Ah Zeus Allfather, Athênê, Apollo, that this might be,  
That never a man of the thousands of Troy from the death might flee,  
Nor yet of the Argives any, but only I and thou,  
That alone we might rend Troy's hallowed battlement-veil from her brow!" 100

In such wise each unto other the eager words they said.  
But Aias no longer abode, for with darts was he sorely bestead,  
Overborne by the purpose of Zeus and the haughty Trojan's rout ;  
And with terrible clanging the glittering helmet his temples about  
Clashed 'neath the hail of the javelins ; and battered he was evermore 105  
On the cheek-plates goodly-wrought ; and his left arm wearied sore  
With stoutly upbearing his glancing shield : yet they might not prevail  
To dash it aside from his breast with the storm of their javelin-hail.  
And ever he panted with labouring lungs : streamed every limb [110  
With the sweat of his travail : no respite to breathe was there left unto him ;  
And on all sides evil was heaped upon evil ghastly and grim.

Tell to me, Muses, now, which abide in Olympus' hall,  
In what wise first did the flame on the galleys Achaian fall.  
It was Hector to Aias that strode, and the shaft of his ashen pike,  
Hard by the head thereof, with his mighty sword did he strike. 115



Clear through it he shore, and lo, Telamonian Aias swung  
All vainly a pointless spear in his hand, and afar from him flung  
Clanged to the earth as it fell that massy brazen head.  
And Aias knew in his noble heart—and he shuddered in dread—  
The deeds of the Gods, how Zeus high-thundering utterly broke 120  
His counsel of battle, and victory willed to the Trojan folk.  
Then aback from the darts he drew, and the tireless fire they hurled  
On the fleet ship: swiftly around her the fierce flames tossed and whirled.  
So fire wreathed round that stern: then smote upon either thigh  
Achilles, and thus to Patroclus with eager words did he cry: 125  
“Up, Zeus-begotten Patroclus, lord of the war-steed, rise!  
The blast of the flame of the foe on the galleys I see with mine eyes.  
Now lest they win the ships, and the home-return be lost,  
Speedily don thine harness, and I will assemble the host.”  
He spake, and Patroclus in flame-bright brass his body arrayed. 130  
Unto his ankles first the greaves fair-fashioned he laid  
Whereon the ankle-clasps of the burnished silver shone.  
Then for a fence of his breast the corslet of proof did he don,  
Cunningly wrought, star-gleaming, of Aiakus’ fleetfoot son.  
And the brazen falchion silver-bestarred o’er his shoulders he flung, 135  
And the baldric withal, wherefrom the huge strong buckler hung.  
And a fair-wrought helmet he drew down over his gallant head:  
Terribly nodded the crest with the dark mane overshadowed.  
And he took to him lances twain well poised to his hand for his need;  
Only he took not the spear of Aiakus’ fleetfoot seed, 140

The stark spear, massy and huge : mid Achaia's host there was none  
Might swing it, but strength for the wielding thereof had Achilles alone,  
The shaft that Cheiron had brought to his father, the ashen beam  
From the crest of Pelion hewn, o'er the slaughter of heroes to gleam.  
Automedon then he commanded to harness the steeds to the yoke : 145  
Him, next rank-rifting Achilles, he honoured above all folk ;  
And trustiest was he to him, his summons in battle to heed.  
So the swift steeds unto the car for his lord did Automedon lead,  
Xanthus and Balius ; swiftly they flew as the racing breeze.  
It was even the Harpy Podargê that bare to the West-wind these, 150  
What time by the flow of the Ocean-stream she fed in a mead.  
In the traces beside them he harnessed Pedasus, peerless steed.  
Forth of Eëtion's town that horse did Achilles lead,  
And his earth-born feet kept pace with immortal coursers' speed.  
Bidding the Myrmidons arm them for fight did Achilles fare 155  
Through the tents mid the glitter of battle-gear ; and as wolves they were,  
Raw-ravening beasts, in whose spirits unspeakable strength doth abide,  
Which have rent a mighty-antlered stag on a dark hill-side,  
And devour him, that all their jaws are bedabbled with blood of the slaughter,  
And thereafter the horde of them goeth to lap the dusky water 160  
From the face of a sunless spring with their red tongues flickering thin,  
While drip from their jaws the gouts of gore, and their breasts within  
Is a heart unquailing, and gorged is their belly gaunt and lean :  
So seemed they, the captains and chiefs of the Myrmidon battle-throng,  
As around the fleetfoot Aiakid's henchman valiant and strong 165

They mustered ; amidst them Achilles the warrior-champion stood,  
As he marshalled the chariots and kindled the spear-men's battle-mood.

Swift barks fifty there were, wherein that Zeus-loved lord,  
Achilles, had led the host of his war-folk Ilium-ward.

On their thwarts were his hero companions, in each two score and ten ; 170

And he chose whom chiefly he trusted for captains of these, five men :

And himself was king over all in the greatness of his might.

One squadron Menesthius led, of the corslet gleaming bright,

Son of the river Spercheius that falleth from heaven's height.

Polydorê the lovely bare him, a daughter of Peleus' race, 175

To Spercheius the tireless, a woman that couched in a God's embrace ;

But in name unto Borus she bare him, to Periêres' son,

Who in men's sight had her to wife, with a countless bride-price won.

And the second Eudôrus the valiant forth to the battle led,

Whom the fair to behold in the dance, Polymêlê, a maid unwed, 180

Bare, Phylas' daughter was she, whom the Argus-slayer strong

Loved, when his eyes had beheld her as rang from her lips the song

Unto Artemis golden-shafted, the clear-voiced Huntress-queen.

Forthright to her bower he clomb, and he couched by her side unseen,

Hermes, averter of ills, and he gave her a goodly son, 185

Eudôrus, unmatched in the race, and in battle a mighty one.

But after that Eileithuia the Lady of Travail had given

That babe to behold the beams of the sun and the light of heaven,

Her did the scion of Aktor, Echeekles the stalwart and bold,

Lead to his palace, the bride that he won with gifts untold. 190

But Phylas the old man nurtured and cherished the babe left lone,  
Folding him round with his love, as though he were son of his own.  
And the third band unto the fray with Peisander the valiant pressed,  
Maimalus' son, who of all the Myrmidon men was the best,  
Save only the comrade of Peleus' son, in the javelin-cast. 195

And with Phoinix the grey car-lord the fourth to the battle passed.  
With the fifth did Alkimedon, princely son of Laerkes, stand.  
So then when Achilles had ranged all, parting them band by band,  
With their captains, he uttered his hest, and he spake a vehement word :

“Myrmidons, see ye that no man forget those threats which I heard, 200  
Those threats which ye hurled at the Trojans amidst of the ships as ye lay,  
Through all the time of my wrath, and upbraiding me each man would say :  
‘Beshrew thee, Peleides !—thy mother's breasts gave gall to thy lips !

O ruthless, who holdest thy men in their own despite by the ships !  
Lo now, in the sea-tracking galleys again let us homeward depart, 205  
Forasmuch as baleful wrath hath fallen thus on thine heart !’

So oft-times ye spake as ye thronged me : but now hath dawned the day  
Of the mighty strife for the which ye were wont aforetime to pray.  
Now, whoso hath valiant heart, let him battle with Troy's array.”

So speaking he kindled their courage, and each man's heart beat high ; 210  
And closer the ranks closed up at their captain's challenge-cry.  
And as when one buildeth a wall with the stones in close-set rows  
For a stately house, for a screen when the blast of the wild wind blows,  
Even so did the helms and the boss-starred shields dense-thronging close.  
Targe pressed upon targe, and helmet on helmet, and man on man ; 215



And from morion to nodding morion the leaping lightning ran  
 As the helm-crests swayed ; so densely shoulder to shoulder they stood.  
 And in front of them all towered harnessed for fight two warriors good,  
 Patroclus, Automedon, they : in their hearts one purpose glowed,  
 To fight in the Myrmidon van. But hero Achilles strode 220  
 Into his tent, and uplifted the lid of a chest fair-wrought,  
 Curious-carven, which Thetis the silver-sandalled brought  
 To his galley, to bear oversea, and with tunics she stored it full,  
 And with mantles for screens from the blast, and with rugs thick-woven of wool.  
 And therein was a fashioned chalice, and no lips ever quaffed, 225  
 No lips of man, from its burnished splendour the flame-flushed draught ;  
 And to none of the Gods save Father Zeus did he pour from the same.  
 This took he forth of the chest, and he cleansed it with brimstone flame.  
 Thereafter with fair-flowing streams of water he washed that cup,  
 And his hands he washed, and with wine fire-gleaming he filled it up. 230  
 Then stood he amidst of the court, and he prayed, and the wine he poured,  
 Looking up to the sky, and was seen of Zeus the Thunder-lord.

“ Zeus, King of Dodona, Pelasgian, thou that abidest afar,  
 Who art Lord of Dodona the stormy, and round thee the dwellings are [235  
 Of thy prophets the Selli, with feet unwashen, whose couch is the ground :—  
 Of a truth, when aforetime I prayed to thee, grace in thy sight have I found,  
 And thou honouredst me, and thou scourgedst the folk of Achaia sore :  
 Now also, I pray thee, vouchsafe unto me this one boon more :  
 Lo I, even I, mid the throng of the gathered galleys abide,  
 But my comrade I send, with many a Myrmidon hero beside. 240

O Zeus, O Far-beholder, let glory attending him go!  
Make valiant the heart in his breast, to the end that Hector may know  
Whether mine henchman hath cunning in battle alone to contend,  
Or in that hour only rage the invincible hands of my friend  
When I myself go forth to the toil of the Lord of War. 245  
But when from the ships he hath driven the strife and the onset-roar,  
Then all unscathed to the swift ships back may he fare again  
With his harness of war and his men of the grapple of close fight fain."

Then Zeus the Counsel-father heard him in prayer as he cried,  
And half his petition he granted the half thereof he denied. 250  
He vouchsafed him to hurl the war and the strife from the galleys aback;  
He denied him again to return alive from the battle-wrack.

So when he had poured unto Father Zeus, and had made his request,  
He returned to his tent, and he laid that chalice again in the chest.  
Then came he and stood in front of his tent, and his heart yearned yet 255  
To behold the terrible strife when Achaian and Trojan met.

Then marshalled with mighty-hearted Patroclus forth did they go  
With measured tramp, till with spirits exulting they burst on the foe.  
And suddenly like unto wasps of the wayside forth they broke—  
As the wasps that children in children's fashion be wont to provoke; 260  
For their wont is ever to vex those dwellers beside the way  
With thoughtless hearts, and many for that their mischief must pay.  
Then if haply thereafter a wayfaring man, as he wendeth thereby,  
Shall unwittingly rouse them, forth with a heart unquailing they fly  
All in a swarm, and they fight for their little ones dauntlessly: 265

Bearing the heart and the spirit of such from the ships poured out  
The Myrmidon host, and rose the quenchless onset-shout.

And the cry of Patroclus rang through the roar of the battle-rout :

“ Myrmidons, comrades all of Achilles Peleus' child,

Quit you like men, and remember your prowess furious-wild, 270

That so we may honour Peleides, the man that is chiefest in might

By the ships of the Argives, he and his henchmen that close in the fight,

And that Atreus' son may know, Agamemnon of far-stretching rule,

How he scorned Achaia's best with the mad blind spite of the fool !”

So speaking he kindled their courage, and each man's heart beat high ; 275

And all in a throng on the Trojans they poured, and rang to their cry

With a terrible echo the ships, as the cheering host swept on.

But the Trojans, so soon as they looked on Menoitius' stalwart son,

Even him and his henchman, as lightened their harness across the field,

Shaken in every man was his soul : the battalions reeled. 280

For it seemed them that Peleus' fleetfoot son mid the ships had cast

Wrath out of his heart, and had chosen him lovingkindness at last ;

And to 'scape from the sudden destruction each glanced round him aghast.

Then from the hand of Patroclus the gleaming javelin flashed

Full in the midst, where thickest the fighters in battle-shock clashed, 285

By the stern of the galley of Protesilaus the mighty of heart.

And Pyraichmes the lord of Paionia's chariots he smote with the dart,—

Who had led them from Amydon-town by broad-flowing Axius' stream,—

Smote on his rightward shoulder, and backward with agony-scream

Down fell he in dust, and his comrade Paionians were panic-thrilled 290

All round, for the souls of them all Patroclus with terror had filled  
When the life of their captain, their mightiest in prowess of battle, he spilled.  
From the galleys he drave them, he quenched the fire as fiercely it burned,  
And half burnt there was the galley left ; and flightward turned  
The Trojans with clamour unearthly, and forth the Danaans poured 295  
Through the line of the ships, and a din unceasing heavenward roared.  
And as when from the soaring crest of a mighty mountain is rolled  
By Lightning-gatherer Zeus a cloud clinging fold over fold,  
And out of the dimness the heights and the mountain forelands start,  
And the glens, and the heaven's blue depths unfathomed are rifted apart ; 300  
So the Danaans, when from the ships they had beaten the flames back, won  
A scanty breathing-space, but respite from war was there none ;  
For the Trojans not yet by the Arês-belovèd Achaians' might  
Were chased in confusion of rout from the dark-hulled ships outright,  
But yet they withstood them, and gave from the ships in their own despite. 305  
So the ranks were broken, and chieftain by chieftain's hand 'gan fall ;  
And Patroclus the stalwart son of Menoitius first of them all,  
As Arêrlykus turned backward to flee, with the keen-whetted brass  
Suddenly hurled, and clear through his thigh did the point of it pass ;  
And the lance-head shattered the bone, and he fell on his face in the dust. 310  
Menelaus the valiant the while at the breast of Thoas thrust,  
Where bared by the shield-rim it showed, and unstrung was his every limb.  
And as Amphiklus charged, Phyleides with keen glance watching him  
Stabbed at the top of his leg, where thickest the muscle's brawn  
Upswelleth, and shearing the sinews asunder onward hath gone 315



The spear-head, and over his eyes was the veil of darkness drawn.  
 And Nestor's sons—Antilochus stabbed with his keen-whetted spear,  
 And on through Atymnius' flank he drave the lance-head clear ;  
 And he fell on his face : then on with his spear rushed Maris amain  
 To close with Antilochus, vengeance-athirst for his brother slain. 320  
 And in front of the corpse he stood : but ere he dealt a blow  
 Thrasymêdes the godlike was swifter, and thrust, and he missed not his foe,  
 Sudden-smiting his shoulder : the point of the lance from the muscles shore  
 His arm at the root, and clean through the shattered bone it tore ;  
 Down-crashing he fell, and over his eyes did the death-mist pour. 325  
 So these twain slain by the hands of brethren twain lay dead,  
 Sarpedon's valiant companions down unto Erebus sped,  
 Amisôdarus' javelin-hurling sons, of whose father was nursed  
 The resistless Chimaira, a bane unto many, a horror accurst.  
 And Aias Oïleus' seed upon Kleobulus hath sprung, 330  
 He hath caught him alive mid the rout, and his falchion on high hath he swung,  
 Down through his neck hath it flashed, and the strength of his limbs is unstrung ;  
 And with blood was the whole blade warmed, and darkened his eyes neath the  
 Of the raven wings of death and the overmastering doom. [gloom  
 Then rushed on each other Lykon and Pêneleôs, for the twain 335  
 Had missed with the lance, and the lightning had leapt from their hands in vain :  
 So they closed with the swords. At the crown of the crested helm of his foe  
 With his battle brand Lykon lashed : but shivered to shards with the blow  
 Was the brand at the hilt : then deep in his neck was buried the blade  
 Of Pêneleôs 'neath his ear, till the hilt by the skin was stayed. 340

Drooped sideward his head, and his fainting limbs to the earth were cast.  
And Mêriones upon Akamas came with feet flying fast,  
And his rightward shoulder he smote, when fain in his car he had fled,  
And he fell from his chariot, and over his eyes was the death-mist shed.  
And Idomencus stabbed at Erymas' mouth with the pitiless brass, 345  
And clear through his head did the brazen point of the lance-head pass  
Under the brain, and the white skull-bones did it cleave and crush, [rush  
And the teeth from their sockets were dashed, and his eyes with a swift blood-  
Were drowned, and up through his mouth and his nostrils the gore did he spout  
Wide-gaping, and death's black cloud enfolded him round about. 350

So slew these chiefs of the Danaans each his man that day.  
And as ravening wolves seize lambs or kidlings, snatching the prey  
Out of the midst of a flock that is scattered wide on the wold  
Through a shepherd's heedless folly, and this do the spoilers behold ;  
And they rend for their banquet the helpless-innocent ones forthright ; 355  
So on the Trojans the Danaans fell, and yelling affright  
Was in all their thoughts, and they wholly forgot their stormy might.

And Aias the mighty at Hector the brazen-helmed evermore  
Was aiming his lance : but he in his cunning of battle-lore  
With his shield of the tough bull-hide his shoulders broad would screen, 360  
And his eyes for the hiss of the arrows, the hurtling of darts, were keen.  
Good sooth, but he marked full well how turned was the battle's tide,  
Yet to save his trusty companions the brunt of the fight did he bide.

And as when from Olympus a cloud o'er the heaven's deep blue rusheth fast  
Out of the welkin, when Zeus on-speedeth the hurricane blast, 365

So suddenly rose from the ships their cry and their panic-dread,  
And in wild disarray o'er the trench did they flee ; and his fleet steeds sped  
Back bearing Hector in war-gear, and there he forsook in his flight  
His folk, whom the deep-delved trench held back in their own despite.  
And many a swift car-speeding team wild-straining to cross 370  
Snapped short the pole, and left the car of their lord in the foss.  
And Patroclus pursued on-speeding his men with cheer on cheer  
With purpose of bane to his foes, and the Trojans with shrieking and fear  
Thronged all the ways as they scattered : the blast dust-laden on high  
Rolled broad 'neath the clouds, and strained the thunderfoot horses to fly, 375  
As aback to the city from tent and from galley the chariots they whirled.  
But Patroclus, where densest the rout in its huddled confusion was hurled,  
Thither with shouting he pressed, and his foes 'neath his axles were dashed  
Flung headlong as staggering cars overtoppled and earthward crashed.  
Clear over the trench did the fleetfoot immortal car-steeds spring— 380  
Glorious gifts which the high Gods gave unto Peleus the king—  
On-storming : on Hector's track was his spirit driving him aye  
Longing to smite him, but fast did his fleet steeds bear him away.

And as when 'neath the scourge of the tempest lashed is the whole dark land  
In the latter summer, when wildest the rain-floods pour from the hand 385  
Of Zeus, when against the children of men his anger doth burn  
Who with violence amidst the assembly the statutes thwartwise turn,  
When justice they drive from their midst, nor the vengeance of Gods they heed ;  
And all their rivers in flood overbrimming onward speed  
And many a hill-side deep by the rushing torrents is ploughed, 390

As on to the dark-blue sea they roll with groaning loud  
In headlong plunge from the hills, and they ruin the labours of man ;  
So did the steeds of the Trojans groan aloud as they ran.

But so soon as Patroclus had rifted the foremost ranks of the foe,  
Back to the galleys he turned them, and suffered them not to go 395  
In their mad haste up to the city, but there in the space that lay  
Betwixt the river, the ships, and the high-built wall did he slay  
Swift-swooping, and wreaked for many a comrade the vengeance due.  
Yea, Pronoüs there with his flame-bright javelin first he slew,  
Piercing his breast by the shield-rim bared, that his limbs were unstrung : 400  
Down-crashing he fell : and now upon Ênops' child hath he sprung,  
Even on Thestor,—and he on the goodly-burnished car  
Sat crouching, for terror-distraught were his wits ; from his hands afar  
Had the reins been whirled :—to the side of the wretch Patroclus rushed  
And his right jaw stabbed with the spear : through the midst of his teeth it  
O'er the car-rail dragged he the man by the spear, as a fisher-wight, [crushed.  
On a rock-shelf sitting, with line and with hook of the brass flame-bright  
Draggeth up from the sea to the shore a huge fish silver-scaled,  
So him from the chariot agape on the glittering spear hath he haled.  
On his face did he fling him, and even as he fell the life of him passed. 410  
Then rushed Erylaüs on him, but a mighty stone he cast  
At the midst of his brow, and utterly cleft in twain was his head  
In the massy helmet, and he on his face to the earth fell dead,  
And around him the darkness of death the devourer of spirits was shed.  
By his hand did Amphoterus then, Epaltes, and Erymas fall, 415



And Tlepolemus son of Damastor, and Echius, Pyris withal ;  
 Iphis, Euippus, he slew, Polymêlus Argeas' son ;  
 On the all-sustaining earth did he stretch them one after one.

Now soon as Sarpedon was ware of the havoc Patroclus made,  
 How his men of the tunics ungirt by his hands on the earth were laid, 420  
 Then did the hero the godlike Lycian men upbraid :

"Shame, Lycians, whitherward flee ye? Now charge keen on the foe!  
 Lo, I, even I, will meet this champion, and so shall I know  
 What hero is this that prevaiileth, and manifold mischief hath wrought  
 To the Trojans, and many a brave man's knees to the earth hath brought." 425

As he spake, to the ground from his chariot he leapt, and his armour rang ;  
 And against him Patroclus beholding it down from his war-car sprang.  
 And even as bow-beaked vultures crooked of talon fight  
 With wild screams ringing afar on a great crag's rugged height,  
 So with a wild shout these on each other rushed. At the sight 430  
 Was the son of Kronos the Lord of Unsearchable Counsels stirred  
 With ruth, and to Hêrê his sister and wife he spake the word :

"Ah me, that Sarpedon my child, my well-belovèd one  
 Is doomed to be slain by the hands of Patroclus Menoitius' son !  
 Now the thoughts of mine heart be divided in twain as I muse this day:— 435  
 Shall I send him away alive from the midst of the dolorous fray,  
 And set him down where the fruitful acres of Lycia lie,  
 Or now by the hands of Menoitius' son shall I leave him to die?"

Answered him Hêrê the Queen, the Lovely-eyed, and she said :  
 "What hast thou to do saying this, O Kronos' son most dread ? 440

A man that is mortal-born, long since foredoomed by fate,  
Art thou minded backward to pluck from death's dread-echoing gate?  
Do after thy will—but the rest of the Gods shall praise thee not.  
This too will I tell thee, and thou in thine heart for this take thought:—  
If homeward thou send Sarpedon alive from the fight, take heed 445  
Lest haply another God beside shall be minded to speed  
A son that himself hath begotten forth from the fury of war:  
For fighting for yon great city of Priam many there are  
Of the sons of the Deathless, and these shalt thou fill with wrath most grim.  
But and if he be dear unto thee, if the soul of thee mourneth for him, 450  
Yet let him be, that he perish amidst of the mighty strife,  
That the hands of Patroclus Menoitius' son may spill his life.  
But so soon as his soul and his life shall have fled as he lieth there,  
Then send thou Death and gentle Sleep his body to bear  
Far hence, until they be come unto Lycia-land the wide, 455  
And there 'neath a grave-mound his brethren and kinsfolk his ashes shall hide,  
With a pillar thereon, for the honour is this of the dead which have died."

She spake, and the Father of Gods and of men consented thereto;  
Yet down on the earth did he shed blood-drops in a crimson dew  
To honour his dear-loved son, whom Patroclus was doomed to slay 460  
On the fruitful Troyland soil, from his fatherland far away.

So when they were now drawn nigh, as against each other they came,  
Then hurled Patroclus, and smote Thrasymêlus, a man of fame,  
For the valiant chariot-henchman of King Sarpedon he was:  
In the nether belly he smote him, and palsied his limbs with the brass. 465

Then leapt on his foe Sarpedon, and thrust with his lance flame-bright ;  
But he missed him, yet did the spear on the car-steed Pegasus light  
On the rightward shoulder : outgasping his life with a piercing cry  
He fell in the dust, and moaned, and forth did the life of him fly.  
Then his yokefellows started asunder, the yoke groaned, rein with rein 470  
Was tangled, so soon as lay in the dust that trace-horse slain.  
But Automedon spear-renowned for their strait found help at need,  
For he snatched from beside his thigh his long-edged sword with speed,  
And he rushed and he cut the trace-horse loose, neither lingered in vain ;  
So were the steeds set right, in the harness again did they strain ; 475  
And for heart-consuming strife once more did they close, they twain.  
Then hurled Sarpedon his glittering lance, but in vain was it sped,  
For over Patroclus' shoulder to leftward the spear-point fled,  
Nor smote him : Patroclus thereafter his javelin swung on high,  
And nowise in vain from his hand did the murder-lightning fly ; 480  
But there where the midriff fenceth the restless heart did he smite.  
Down fell he, as falleth an oak or a poplar's stately height,  
Or as when mid the mountains the craftsmen have hewn a pine-tree tall  
With axes newly whetted, to build them a galley withal.  
So there in front of the steeds and the car outstretched did he lie 485  
Groaning and clutching the bloody dust in his agony.  
And as when mid a herd of the trailfoot kine a lion doth creep  
And seizeth a tawny bull great-hearted with sudden leap,  
And under the jaws of the lion he groaneth his life away,  
So under Patroclus the captain of Lycia's spear-array 490

Raged, smitten to death ; and he cried on his comrade, and thus did he say :

“ Dear Glaukus, thou champion mid heroes, sore is the need that thou  
Shouldst show thee a valiant spearman, a dauntless warrior now.  
Be grim strife now thy desire, if indeed thou art keen for the fray.  
First go thou on every hand to the Lycian war-array, 495  
And enkindle their hero-chiefs to fight for Sarpedon slain,  
And thereafter to battle for me come thou thyself again.  
For confusion of face shall my name be to thee, and a bitter mock  
Through all thy days evermore, if to-day the Achaian folk  
Shall spoil of his harness of fight thy friend mid the ships laid low. 500  
Now manfully bear thee, and kindle my people to face the foe.”

So spake he, and straightway thereafter the veil of death was spread  
O'er his eyes and his nostrils. Then on his breast did Patroclus tread,  
And he plucked from the flesh the spear, and the midriff came with the brass,  
Yea, out of the selfsame gash did his soul and the spear-head pass. 505  
And the Myrmidons stayed the snorting chariot-steeds thereby,  
For the car of their lords was forsaken, and eager they were to fly.  
But on Glaukus came sore pain, that cry of his friend when he heard ;  
And, seeing he could not defend him, his heart was anguish-stirred  
And straitly his arm with his hand did he grasp, for that faint with pain 510  
Was he yet from the wound which Teucer's shaft, as he rushed amain  
On the high-built rampart, had dealt to defend the Achaians from bane.  
And then to Apollo the Smiter from Far he uttered his prayer :

“ Hearken, O King, who art somewhere in Lycia the fruitful-fair,  
Or haply in Troyland thou art—but everywhere heard by thee 515



Is the man in his trouble that crieth, such trouble as compasseth me.  
 For a grievous wound have I gotten ; the pangs sharp-stabbing thrill  
 From mine arm even down to mine hand, and wellethe the red blood still,  
 It cannot be stanchèd, and thereby is my shoulder burdened sore :  
 And my spear may I not grip firmly, I cannot go forth any more 520  
 To battle with foes : and low is a champion of champions laid,  
 Sarpedon the child of Zeus—yet his son doth he nowise aid.  
 Yet, I beseech thee, heal my grievous wound, O King,  
 And assuage thou the anguish, and give to me might, that my voice may ring  
 Through the Lycian ranks of war as I kindle their battle-might, 525  
 And that I myself to defend the corpse of the slain may fight.”

So did he cry, and Phoebus Apollo heard as he prayed.  
 Forthright he assuaged his pangs, and the dark blood's flow he stayed  
 From the grievous wound, and his spirit with sudden might he thrilled.  
 And Glaukus was ware thereof, and his soul with joy was filled, 530  
 Because that so swiftly the mighty God had heard him pray.  
 Then first he enkindled the chiefs of the Lycian war-array,  
 Passing this way and that through the host, to fight for Sarpedon dead.  
 Unto the Trojans thereafter with long swift strides he sped.  
 On Polydamas Panthoüs' son and Agênor the godlike he cried : 535  
 To Aeneas he came, and to brazen-helmeted Hector's side ;  
 And he uttered the winged word-flight, and with eager lips 'gan say :  
 “ Hast thou wholly forgotten, O Hector, thine outland aid this day,  
 The men that for thy sake far from fatherland and friend  
 Are losing their lives, and these hast thou no will to defend 540

Low lieth Sarpedon, the chief of the Lycian spearman-band,  
Who in Lycia maintained the right, and her shield was the strength of his hand  
Him brazen Arês hath laid 'neath the spear of Patroclus low!  
Friends, stand by his side!—let your hearts be indignation-aglow  
Lest the Myrmidons spoil his mail, lest his corpse they foully entreat, 545  
That their wrath for the Danaans slain may taste a revenge most sweet,  
For all that we slew with the spears by the sea-swift ships of the fleet.”

Then the inmost hearts of the Trojans with unendurable grief,  
Heart-crushing, were filled ; for, albeit he was but an outland chief,  
The bulwark he was of their town, and with him had come from afar 550  
A countless host, and himself was a mighty man of war.

And in fury they charged on the Danaans : Hector led them on,  
Being wroth for the sake of Sarpedon, the while Menoitius' son,  
Patroclus the lion-heart, cheered on the Achaïans. First  
On the two Aïantes he cried, which before were battle-athirst : 555

“ Aïantes, now let your hearts take joy to withstand the foe,  
Valiant as ever, yea, braver yet, if it may be so !  
Low lieth the man who foremost scaled the rampart's height,  
Sarpedon ;—and shall we not take him, and do to his corse despite,  
And strip from his body his armour, and whatso comrade shall come 560  
For his rescuing, him with the pitiless brass let us speed to his doom !”

So spake he, but they unbidden were eager and fain of the fray.  
So when upon either side they had massed their battle-array,  
Trojans and Lycian warriors, Achaïans and Myrmidon men,  
To fight for the corpse of the slain they clashed in the onset then 565

With a terrible shout : loud clanged the heroes' smitten mail.  
And with baleful night did Zeus that mighty grapple veil  
To make for his son sore labour of battle and deadly bale.

First backward the Trojans bare the Achaians flashing-eyed,  
For a man of the Myrmidons, nowise their meanest, was smitten and died, 570  
Epeigeus the godlike, the son of Agaklês the mighty-souled,  
Which was king in Budeion aforetime, the stately battle-hold ;  
But when that his kinsman, a goodly man, by his hand had bled,  
Unto Peleus a suppliant, and Thetis the silver-sandalled, he fled ;  
And these to Achilles the battle-rifter joined him, to fare 575  
Unto Ilium the war-steed land, to fight with the Trojans there.

And when now he was seizing the dead man, Hector the glorious threw  
A huge rock-shard, and his head was utterly cleft in two  
In the massy helmet : he fell on his face to the earth on the dead,  
And around him the darkness of death the devourer of spirits was shed. 580  
Then for his comrade slain was Patroclus anguished at heart.

Straight on through the forefighters like to a fleet-winged hawk did he dart,  
Which scattereth starlings and daws in affright with his sudden swoop ;  
So, lord of the steed, Patroclus, full on the Lycian troop  
Didst thou rush, and on Trojans, wrathful at heart for thy friend laid low. 585  
At Ithaimenes' dear-loved son Sthenelaüs a stone did he throw,  
At his neck, and beneath its rush did the rifted sinews crack.  
Back darted the foremost : Hector the glorious faltered back.  
And far as attaineth a slender-shafted javelin's flight

When a man in the athlete-strife maketh uttermost proof of his might, 590

Or when foemen be pressing upon him athirst for his life in the fray,  
So far did the Trojans recoil, and the Danaans thrust them away.  
But Glaukus the first, the captain of Lycia's spear-array,  
Turned him about, and Bathyklês the mighty-souled did he slay,  
Chalkon's belovèd son, whose dwelling in Hellas was found, 595  
Who for wealth and the bliss of his days mid the Danaan folk was renowned ;  
Him Glaukus stabbed with the keen spear full in the midst of his breast,  
Suddenly turning upon him, as hard on his flight he pressed.  
And he fell with a crash, and o'er the Achaians sore grief came  
For a brave man's fall, and greatly the Trojans rejoiced for the same. 600  
Then thronged they around him : yet the Achaians forgot not there  
Their prowess, but full on the Trojans the fury of battle they bare.  
And Mêriones slew a Trojan arrayed in harness fair,  
Laogonus, valiant son of Onêtôr the priest of the shrine  
Of Idaean Zeus,—as a god men rendered him honour divine :— 605  
For he smote 'neath his jaw and his ear ; and swiftly fled his soul  
From his limbs, and over his eyes did a horrible darkness roll.  
Then Aeneas at Mêriones his brazen javelin threw,  
For he trusted to smite him as fenced by his buckler anigh him he drew.  
But with keen glance looking before him he shunned the brazen spear, 610  
For forward he bowed, and the lance long-shafted far to the rear  
Plunged into the earth, and above it the spear-butt quivered in air  
Till Arês the stormy-hearted had spent its fury there.  
So the spear of Aeneas shivering into the earth sank deep,  
Forasmuch as on bootless flight from his brawny hand did it leap. 615



And the heart of Aeneas was wroth for this, and aloud cried he :

“Mêriones, how nimble soever a dancer thou be,

My lance, if I had but touched thee, had stilled thy dancing for aye !”

Spake Mêriones, and to him did the spear-renowned say :

Aeneas, what though thou be strong, thou shalt find it all too hard 620

To quell the prowess of all men, whenso thy path shall be barred

By them that against thee shall come : thou art mortal of mould, I ween.

And if I peradventure shall smite thee through with my javelin keen,

Soon, strong though thou be, though thou trust in thine hands, shalt thou yield

Unto me, when thy soul unto Hades of glorious steeds goeth down.” [thy renown

So spake he, but chiding him cried Menoitius’ stalwart seed :

“Why talkest thou, Mêriones, O thou who art strong for the deed ?

O friend, it is nowise for scoffing words that our Trojan foes

Will flinch from the corpse, ere then over many the earth shall close.

In our hands is the issue of war, but for speech is the council dight, 630

Therefore it nowise needeth to multiply words, but to fight.”

So spake he, and led, and pressed beside him the godlike wight.

And from them—as the din goeth up when the woodmen the broad axe swing

Mid the glens of a mountain, and far away doth the noise of it ring,—

From them went clashing and clanging up from the earth-ways wide, 635

From the brass, from the goodly-fashioned shields of the tough bull-hide,

From the swinging blades and the spears two-headed thrusting there.

But Sarpedon the godlike had no man discerned, how keen soe’er,

For that heaped with darts, and rolled in blood and in dust that day

Even from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, he lay. 640

And ever around the corse were they thronging, as when flies come  
At a farmstead down on the vessels of milk with ceaseless hum  
In the spring, when the white foam-beads to the brim of the milk-pails rise;  
So swarmed they around the corpse, and never his shining eyes  
Turned Zeus from the mighty fray as to this side and that side it rolled, 645  
But he gazed evermore on the heroes, and pondered doubtful-souled  
With many a thought for the death of Patroclus, and mused away  
Whether in that same hour in the midst of the mighty fray  
Hector the glorious there with the brass should smite him and slay  
Over Sarpedon the godlike, and strip from his shoulders his mail, 650  
Or the hero should multiply yet unto many toil and bale.  
And thus, as he mused in his heart, him seemed it were best to be done,  
Even this, that the henchman brave of Achilles Peleus' son  
Should drive the Trojans and Hector the brass-mailed back again  
Unto the city, and spoil of their lives full many men. 655  
Therefore with faintness of spirit he first thrilled Hector's breast [rest  
That he sprang to his chariot, and flightward he turned him, and cried on the  
To flee, for the sinking down of the scales of Zeus he discerned.  
Nor the stalwart Lycians abode any longer, but all they turned  
And fled, when they saw their king with his heart by the death-stab stung 660  
Lying amidst of a heap of corpses, for many were flung  
Upon him, when Zeus wrought high the battle's toil and strain.  
So the Danaans stripped from the shoulders of King Sarpedon slain  
His glittering harness of brass, and Menoitius' strong son gave  
These to his comrades to bear to the hollow ships by the wave. 665

Then to Apollo did Zeus the Cloudrack-gatherer say :

“Go now, dear Phoebus, I pray thee, and snatch from the darts away  
 Sarpedon, and cleanse from the blood dark-clotted, and bearing him go  
 Far off from the battle, and bathe thou him in the river's flow ;  
 With ambrosia anoint him, and clothe him with raiment immortal-fair. 670  
 Thereafter to fleet-winged wafters give thou his corse to bear,  
 Unto Sleep and Death, the Twins, who on soundless-speeding wing  
 To the fair fat land of Lycia the wide my child shall bring.  
 And there 'neath a grave-mound his brethren and kinsmen his ashes shall hide,  
 With a pillar thereon: for the honour is this of the dead which have died.” 675

He spake, nor the hest of his sire did Apollo disobey ;  
 But down from the ridges of Ida he sped to the terrible fray.  
 Straight from mid darts he uplifted Sarpedon the godlike, and thence  
 Bare far to the river's streams, and his body there did he cleanse,  
 With ambrosia anointed, and clothed him with raiment immortal-fair, 680  
 And thereafter to fleet-winged wafters gave he his corse to bear,  
 Unto Sleep and Death, the Twins, who on soundless-speeding wing  
 To the fair fat land of Lycia the wide did the hero bring.

On-cheering his steeds and Automedon pressed Patroclus hard  
 On the Trojans and Lycian men :—ah fool, but his wisdom was marred 685  
 And folly-distraught : had he heeded the hest of Peleus' seed,  
 From the evil doom and the blackness of death had he surely been freed.  
 But the purpose of Zeus doth the counsel of man evermore overbear :  
 He dismayeth the valiant, the victory out of his hand doth he tear  
 Lightly : anon to the battle himself will uprouse him again. 690

Even he in the breast of Patroclus enkindled a fury then.

Who then was the first that thou slewest, the last, what man was he,  
What time, O Patroclus, the Gods to thy death were beckoning thee?

First did Adrêstus, and Autonôus, and Echeklus fall,

Perimus Meges' son, Melanippus, Epistor withal :

695

Mulius, Elasmus smote he thereafter, Pylartes he sped,

Even these, but their fellows in haste from the storm of his fury fled.

Then by the hands of Patroclus the sons of Achaia had won

High-gated Troy, for his spear lightened round him, and aye stormed on,

But for this, that Phoebus Apollo stood on a fair-built tower

700

With purpose of bane for the hero, but shielding Troy with his power.

Thrice on the high wall's corner Patroclus leapt amain,

Thrice backward Apollo's buffet hurled him reeling again

As 'neath his immortal hands the flashing buckler rang.

But when for the fourth time on like a God in his fury he sprang,

705

The winged words pealed with a terrible shout from the lips divine :

"Back, Zeus-begotten Patroclus! Not yet 'neath spear of thine

Is it doomed that the town of the lordly Trojan men shall bow,

Nor yet 'neath Achilles' hand, who is mightier far than thou."

So did he say, and Patroclus a long space backward recoiled,

710

For by dread of the wrath of Apollo the Smiter from Far was he foiled.

By the Skaian gateway did Hector his thunderfoot horses stay,

Wavering whether to plunge yet again mid the roar of the fray,

Or to shout to the people to gather within Troy's walls to hide.

And thus as he pondered, Phoebus Apollo stood by his side

715



Clothed in the shape of a man full stalwart and goodly to see,  
 Asius, uncle of Hector the queller of steeds, was he,  
 Blood-brother of Hekabê, offspring of Dymas, who had his abode  
 In Phrygia, and hard by his dwelling the streams of Sangarius flowed.  
 Clad in his semblance Apollo the Zeus-begotten cried : 720

“Hector, thou oughtest not thus:—from the battle why dost thou hide?  
 Ah to be so much the stronger, as now I am weaker far;  
 Then shouldst thou rue it full soon, to shrink like a craven from war!  
 Nay come, with the strong-hoofed steeds charge thou on Patroclus down,  
 If thou haply mayst smite him and slay, and Apollo may give thee renown.”

So spake the God, and returned to the battle-toil of men ; [725  
 And to war-wise Kebrionês spake Hector the glorious then  
 To lash the steeds into battle, the while Apollo went  
 On through the heart of the fight, and baneful panic he sent  
 On the Argives, but glory did he on the Trojans and Hector bestow. 730  
 But Hector passed all Danaans by, and he laid none low,  
 But down on Patroclus alone with his strong-hoofed horses he swept ;  
 And Patroclus overagainst him to earth from his chariot leapt,  
 In his left hand holding his spear, but the other a flint-shard found,  
 A glittering jagged stone, and the grasp of him compassed it round. 735  
 And he gathered his strength and he hurled: not wide of the mark did it light,  
 Neither vainly he sped it, but Hector's charioteer did he smite—  
 Even Kebrionês, far-famous Priam's bastard son,  
 As he grasped the reins of the car—on the forehead with that sharp stone.  
 And it crushed in both his brows: by the bone was it nowise stopped, 740

And dashed from their sockets to earth in the dust the eyes of him dropped  
In front of his feet, and he, as a diver that springs from a height, [flight.  
Plunged down from the fair-fashioned car, and the life from his bones took  
And with scoffs thou shoutedst above him, Patroclus chariot-knight :

“ Lo, lo, how nimble a wight !—how deft in the diver’s leap ! 745  
Ah if he were but somewhere now on the fish-fraught deep,  
With oysters enow should he fill full many a hungry soul,  
From a ship down-plunging, yea, though the sea should stormily roll ;  
So lightly he diveth headlong on dry land now from the car !  
Good sooth, but amidst our Trojans cunning divers are !” 750

So spake he, and rushed upon Kebrionês the hero-souled  
With a leap as the leap of a lion, which, even as he wasteth the fold,  
Hath been struck on the breast with a dart, that his prowess hath wrought his  
So didst thou rush, Patroclus, on Kebrionês full fain. [bane ;  
But Hector overagainst him hath leapt from his car to the plain. 755  
And there over Kebrionês they strove like lions twain,  
Which over a slaughtered stag amidst of the mountain-crests  
In famished fury are grappling and rending with dauntless breasts.  
So there over Kebrionês those battle-kindlers warred,  
Patroclus Menoitius’ son, and Hector the glorious lord, 760  
Each eager to cleave with the ruthless brass the flesh of his foe.  
By the head did Hector seize that corse, and he let not go ;  
And Patroclus grasped by his foot, and the others to left and to right,  
Trojans and Danaans, clashed in the desperate grapple of fight.

And as when the East-wind and South-wind in stormy contention strive 765

In the glens of a mountain, a deep dark forest to rend and rive,  
 Scourging the smooth-stemmed cornel-tree, and the beech and the ash,  
 While against each other their far-spreading branches swing and dash  
 With unearthly din, and ever the shattering limbs of them crash ;  
 So did Achaïans and Trojans contending stab and slash 770  
 On-rushing : they dreamed not of ruinous flight, nor those nor these ;  
 And many a keen-whetted spear plunged deep round Kebrionês ;  
 Deep plunged they, the feathered arrows from strings hard-straining that sprang,  
 And by many a huge stone battered the dinted targes rang,  
 As they fought o'er him. Mighty he lay mid the whirlwind of dust of war, 775  
 As the mighty should lie, forgetting the joy of the battle-car.

So all through the morning-tide, and still while the day waxed hot,  
 Fast fell the folk, as the shafts from host unto host were shot.  
 But so soon as the sun 'gan slope to the hour for unloosing the yoke,  
 Then even beyond their fate prevailed the Achaian folk. 780  
 And forth from the darts the hero Kebrionês did they hale,  
 From the onset-cry of the Trojans, and stripped from his shoulders his mail.  
 And Patroclus burst on the Trojan array with purpose of bane ;  
 Thrice, battle-peer of the fleetfoot War-god, charged he amain,  
 Raising his terrible shout, and thrice laid nine men low. 785  
 But when for the fourth time, dread as a God, he rushed on the foe,  
 Then unto thee, Patroclus, appeared the end of life,  
 For Phoebus came to meet thee amidst of the mighty strife,  
 Dreadful. He marked not the God as he passed through the battle rout,  
 For he came to meet him with shoulders in dense cloud compassed about, 790

And behind him he stood, and his back and the shoulders broad of him  
Smote with his palm : with the shock did his starting eyeballs swim.  
Yea, far from his head the helmet Phoebus Apollo dashed,  
And rolling away 'neath the feet of the car-steeds clanged and clashed [795  
That visored casque; and with blood and with dust were the hairs of the plume  
Polluted. But ere that hour was it nowise the high Gods' doom  
That with dust that horsemane-crested helmet should ever be marred,  
But the head of a godlike man and his comely brow did it guard,  
Even Achilles, but Zeus unto Hector gave it now  
To bear on his head—it was even the shadow of death on his brow. 800  
And shivered was all the lance long-shafted within his hand,  
The stark spear massy and huge; from his shoulders the baldric-band,  
With the shield that from shoulder to ankle reached, was hurled to the plain,  
And Apollo the Zeus-born snapped his corslet-clasps in twain.  
And wilderment seized his spirit; his glorious limbs were unstrung, 805  
And he stood all dazed. From behind him a Dardan warrior flung  
At his back his shoulders between, from anigh, a keen-whetted spear :  
It was Panthoüs' son Euphorbus, who had mid the youths no peer  
In the craft of the lance and the car, and in speed of his feet flying fast :  
Yea, twenty men by then from their cars to the earth had he cast, 810  
Who but newly was come in his chariot to learn the lesson of war.  
He first with the javelin smote thee, Patroclus lord of the car,  
But slew not. He plucked from the flesh the ashen spear away,  
Then backward he fled, and he plunged mid the throng, for he dared not stay  
Patroclus' onset, though fenceless he was, in the midst of the fray. 815



And Patroclus, by stroke of the God and by thrust of the lance overcome,  
 Backward drew to the host of his comrades shrinking from doom.  
 But so soon as Hector beheld Patroclus the mighty of heart  
 Back from the forefront recoiling, smit by the keen-whetted dart, [brass 820  
 He rushed through the ranks till he came full nigh, and he stabbed with the  
 At his nether flank, and clear therethrough did the spear-head pass.  
 Down-crashing he fell, and it troubled the folk of Achaia sore.  
 And as when in battle a lion hath vanquished a tameless boar,  
 As high on a mountain-ridge with dauntless courage they fought  
 For a scanty spring, and by thirst was their fury the higher wrought; 825  
 And he panteth hard, by the might of the lion at last laid low;  
 So, when Menoitius' son had slain full many a foe,  
 Did the spear-thrust of Hector the Priamid rend his life away:  
 And vaunting above him with swift-winged words did the victor say:  
 "Ha, thou didst threaten, Patroclus, to waste the town high-pight 830  
 Of Priam, and take from the Trojan women freedom's light,  
 And to bear them away in thy ships to thy fatherland far overseas!  
 Fool!—but the fleetfoot horses of Hector defending these  
 Speed with their feet to the battle, and I with the spear am renowned  
 Mid the war-loving Trojans, because that in me is a shield for them found 835  
 From the day of bondage: but thee shall the vultures here devour.  
 Wretch, naught hath Achilles availed thee, for all his might and his power,  
 Who, I ween, as thou wentest, charged thee with many an earnest word:  
 'I beseech thee, return not again, Patroclus chariot-lord,  
 Unto the hollow ships, till the tunic blood-defiled 840

Thou hast cleft on the breast of Hector the manslayer, Priam's child.  
So did he charge thee, I ween, and thy witless soul he beguiled!"

Then feebly and faintly thou spakest, Patroclus lord of the steed:

"Ay, boast on, Hector, now: Zeus giveth thee victory's meed,

Even Kronos' son, and Apollo, who lightly have overborne 845

Patroclus—'tis they from my shoulders mine harness of battle have torn.

But if twenty such heroes as thou had endured mine onset to bide,

Here by my spear overmastered had every man of them died.

But baneful Fate and the Offspring of Lêtô have slain me now,

And of men, Euphorbus; and naught but the third in my murder art thou. 850

Yea, this will I tell thee moreover, and deep in thine heart let it stay—

Of a surety thyself not long shalt continue, but even this day

Hard after thee Death and the overmastering Doom press on.

Thou shalt fall by the hands of Achilles, Aiakus' noble son."

And the end of death enshrouded him soon as the word was said, 855

And the soul flitting forth from the limbs to the mansion of Hades had fled,

Wailing her doom, and forsaking her manhood and lustihead.

But to him, yea, dead though he lieth, Hector the glorious saith:

"Patroclus, what hast thou to do to forebode unto me swift death?

Who knoweth but bright-haired Thetis' offspring Achilles perchance 860

Shall, or ever I fall, be smitten, and yield up his life to my lance?"

So spake he, and setting his heel on the corpse he tore from the wound

The brazen lance, and he thrust him aback from the spear to the ground.

And to spill Automedon's life he rushed forthright with his spear,

The fleetfoot Aiakid's godlike henchman-charioteer, 865

Fain was he to smite him : but far was he borne by the car-steeds swift,  
Immortal, on Peleus bestowed for the high Gods' glorious gift.

## BOOK XVII.

*How Achaians and Trojans in darkness fought o'er the corpse of Patroclus.*

**B**UT Arêc-beloved Menelaus, Atreus' son, marked well  
How amidst of the fight overthrown by the Trojans Patroclus fell.  
And harnessed in flame-bright brass through the forefront of battle he hied.  
And as softly-lowing the mother-cow will her calf bestride—  
She hath ne'er known travail before, and her firstling lieth there— 5  
So over Patroclus strode Menelaus of golden hair.  
And before him he stretched his spear and the round of his shapely targe,  
With purpose to slay what man soever against him should charge.  
Nor unheedful the while was Panthoüs' son of the ashen spear  
Of princely Patroclus fallen, for now did he stand full near. 10  
Forthright unto prince Menelaus the Arês-beloved he spoke :  
"Zeus-nurtured Atreus' son, Menelaus captain of folk,  
Draw backward, and leave yon corpse : let be the spoils blood-dyed.  
For no man of Troy or her helpers battle-renowned beside  
First smote with the spear Patroclus amidst of the mighty fray. 15



Thou therefore leave me to win high fame mid the Trojan array,  
Lest haply I smite thee, and take thine honey-sweet life away."

But the prince of the golden hair hurled back the braggart's taunt :

"Zeus Father, how vile a thing is the overweening vaunt !

Good sooth, but a panther's or lion's spirit is not so grim, 20

Nor yet of a wild-boar baleful-souled, when the fury of him

Stormeth in strength most fierce of the forest's mighty ones,

As the pride-uplifted spirit of Panthoüs' spearman sons !

Ha, but of little avail unto Hyperênor's might [fight, 25

Was the steed-queller's youth, when he scorned me, and bode mine onset in

And the vilest warrior was I mid the Danaans—so did he say.

But I say, never the feet of him trod the homeward way

To gladden his well-loved wife and the parents that held him dear.

Even so will I surely bring thy strength unto naught, if here

Thou stand against me !—but back to thy rabble I bid thee begone, 30

Neither stand against me, ere yet thy bane for thy meed thou hast won.

Sooth, even the fool may know the end when the deed is done."

So spake he, yet turned not his purpose aside, but he answered and spake :

"Now, nurtured of Zeus, Menelaus, in truth for my brother's sake

Shalt thou give me revenge, whom thou slewest, and vauntest the blood thou

And a widow hast made his wife in the bride-bower newly-built, [hast spilt, 35

And on them that bare him hast sent lamentation and mourning and woe.

Yet I for the hapless shall be an assuager of mourning, I trow,

If I bear away thine head and all that harness of thine,

And in hands of Panthoüs lay them and Phrontis the lady divine, 40

But verily not long now shall our battle-toil be untried,  
Nor unstriven our strife, whether triumph or terror of death shall betide."

At the round of his shapely shield a furious thrust he sped,  
But prevailed not to pierce it, and turned was the point of the brazen head  
In the mighty buckler. Then with the lance swung high rushed on, 45  
With a prayer unto Father Zeus, Menelaus Atreus' son.  
And he stabbed the nether throat of Euphorbus as backward he drew,  
And with all the weight of his hand Menelaus thrust it through.  
On through the smooth white neck the brazen point cleft sheer ;  
Down-crashing he fell, and clanged above him his battle-gear. 50  
And blood-besprent were his tresses, bright as the Graces' hair,  
And the love-locks looped with the gold and the silver blended fair.  
And as when one reareth a shoot of a fruitful olive-tree  
In a lonely spot where the water upwelleth abundantly,  
And in lovely wise doth it bourgeon, and sway it to and fro 55  
The breezes of many a wind, and it blossometh white as the snow ;  
But there cometh the sudden flaw of a mighty tempest's blast,  
And out of its trench is it torn, and low on the earth is it cast :  
Even so Euphorbus Panthoüs' son of the ashen spear  
Menelaus the Atreid slew, and was spoiling his battle-gear. 60  
And as when in the pride of his strength a lion mountain-reared  
Hath snatched from the pasturing kine a heifer, the best of the herd,  
And, gripping her neck with his strong teeth, bone from bone hath he snapped,  
And he rendeth her inwards and gorgeth her blood by his red tongue lapped ;  
And around him gather the dogs and the shepherd folk, and still 65

Cry long and loud from afar : howbeit they have no will  
To face him in fight, for that pale dismay doth the hearts of them fill :  
Even so in the breast of none of the Trojans was spirit found  
To step forth then and to face Menelaus the war-renowned.  
Then lightly had Atreus' seed that glorious harness won  
Of Euphorbus, but Phoebus Apollo with jealousy looked thereon,  
Who in semblance of Mentès, the chief of Kikonian men, drew near  
To speed against him Hector, the fleetfoot War-god's peer.  
And he lifted his voice unto him, and the light-winged words he spake :

70

“ Now, Hector, in vain art thou chasing that which thou canst not o'ertake, 75  
The horses of Aiakus' war-wise son : full hard they are  
For men that be mortal to quell, and to drive in the battle-car,  
Save only Achilles, the man whom a Goddess-mother bare.  
And Atreus' warrior-son Menelaus the while elsewhere  
Defending Patroclus hath slain the best of the Trojans in fight,  
Euphorbus Panthoüs' son, and hath hushed the storm of his might.”

80

So spake he, and back to the toil of men did the God depart :  
But with terrible anguish o'ershadowed was Hector's inmost heart ; [straightway  
And with swift keen glance he glared through the ranks, and he marked  
How the one was stripping the glorious arms, and the other lay 85  
On the earth, and the blood was welling yet from the wound deep-gashed.  
Through the forefighters strode he, arrayed in brass that as lightning flashed,  
Shouting a far-ringing cry ; he was like to the Fire-god's flame  
Quenchless : the wild-shrilling yell to the ears of Atreides came ;  
And sorely disquieted unto his high-souled spirit he spake :

90

“ Ah me, if now this goodly harness of fight I forsake,  
And Patroclus, who all for mine honour's avenging is here laid low,  
What Danaan warrior shall not be indignant, whoso shall know ?  
But and if against Hector and all Troy's host I shall battle alone  
For shame, they shall hem me round, who are many, and I but one. 95  
And hitherward Hector is leading all the Trojan rout—  
But wherefore communeth my spirit within me thus in doubt ?  
When a man in a God's despite is minded to fight with a foe  
Whom a God doth honour, full soon is he whelmed 'neath a surge of woe.  
Wherefore no Danaan man shall be wroth to behold this sight 100  
How backward from Hector I draw, for with help of the Gods doth he fight.  
But if Aias the battle-helper now might I haply see,  
We twain, as together we fared, would remember the battle-gee,  
Yea, even against a God, if the corse from the foe we might wrest  
For Achilles Peleus' son, for of all ills this were the best.” 105

As pondering thus in the thoughts and intents of his spirit he said,  
Near drew the ranks of the Trojans ; their onset Hector led.  
Then back Menelaus drew, and he left the corpse of the slain,  
Ever turning him round as he went, as a lion of shaggy mane  
Which the dogs and the men are essaying to drive away from the fold 110  
With spears and with shouts, and the heart in his breast that was late so bold  
Groweth chill, and exceeding loth from the garth doth he backward fare ;  
Even so from Patroclus went Menelaus of golden hair.  
But he turned him about and he stood, to the throng of his friends when he won  
Keen-glancing around for Aias the mighty, Telamon's son, 115



Full quickly he marked him to left of the battle far away,  
 As he heartened his warrior comrades, and cheered them on to the fray ;  
 For with strange fear Phoebus Apollo had made their spirits quake.  
 And the hero ran, and with speed he stood by his side, and he spake :

“ Hither, O Aias my brother, for dead Patroclus’ sake 120

Let us speed, to bear to Achilles his body in any wise,  
 Though naked it be, for his arms are bright-helmed Hector’s prize.”

Stirred was the war-wise spirit of Aias to hear that thing.

Through the forefront he strode, Menelaus beside him, the bright-haired king.

Now Hector had stripped from Patroclus his glorious harness of fight, 125

And was dragging him thence, from his shoulders his head with the brass to

And to hale the corse, and to cast it to dogs of Troy to devour. [smite,

Then Aias drew nigh unto him, on-bearing the shield like a tower.

Back into the throng of his men forthright did Hector recoil ;

And he sprang to the floor of his car, and he gave that goodly spoil 130

To the Trojans to bear to the town, for a mighty glory to him.

But Aias covered Menoitius’ son with his broad shield’s rim,

And there he stood as standeth a lion defending his young,

On whom, as he leadeth his whelps through the forest, there cometh a throng

Of huntsman-folk ; but within him the storm of his might doth rise, 135

And the down-drawn skin of his brows overgloometh the fire of his eyes ;

Even so stood Aias defending the hero Patroclus slain ;

And Atreides beside him stood, Menelaus the battle-fain,

And heavy and heavier grew his heart with its bitter pain.

But Glaucus the son of Hippolochus, captain of Lycia’s array, 140

Frowned darkly on Hector the while, and with words of rebuke 'gan say :

“Hector, O goodly to see, in the fight art thou worthless found !

Of a surety in thee is a dastard with goodly glory crowned !

Bethink thee, how wilt thou save thy city left forlorn,

Thou only with those thy folk, the people in Ilium born ? 145

For in any wise none of the Lycians shall fare to the fight after this

Against Danaan men for thy city :—nor thank nor requital there is

For grappling with foes evermore in the battle unrestingly !

How shall a meaner man in his peril be rescued of thee,

O wretch, since even Sarpedon, thine helper in battle-toil 150

And thy guest, thou hast left to be made the Argives' prey and spoil ?

Of him ye had manifold comfort and aid, thy city and thou,

While he lived, but thou hast not cared from the dogs to defend him now.

Wherefore if any man of the Lycians will hearken to me

To return home, swift and sure shall Troy's destruction be. 155

For if now in the Trojans there were but a valiant spirit awake,

Unblenching, such spirit as entereth men that for fatherland's sake

Have arrayed against foemen the toil of the strife, that they shall not quail,

Full quickly within Troy's walls Patroclus' corse should we hale.

Now if we should drag yon dead man out of the battle, and bring 160

Into the mighty city of Priam the ancient king,

Full soon would the Argives yield us Sarpedon's fair war-gear ;

Yea, and his body aback unto Ilium's walls should we bear.

For slain is the friend of the hero who far excelleth in might

All Argive men by the ships, with his henchmen that close in the fight. 165

But thou—against great-heart Aias thou hast not endured to stand,  
 When thine eyes mid the foemen beheld him, then was our champion unmanned,  
 And thou darest not face him in fight, for that mightier than thine is his hand."

But Hector the stormy-crested made answer with frowning brow :  
 " Glaukus, why speakest thou arrogant words—such a hero as thou ? 170  
 Lo now, I had deemed that in wit thou excelledst all beside  
 Which dwelt in the fruitful acres of Lycia-land the wide !  
 But now do I wholly contemn thy wit for the word thou hast cried,  
 In that thou sayest that Aias the giant I dare not abide.  
 Not I at the battle shudder, nor crash of the thundering car : 175  
 But the purpose of Zeus the Aegis-lord is mightier far,  
 Who dismayeth even the valiant, and lightly taketh away  
 His triumph, anon himself doth enkindle him on to the fray.  
 Friend, hither to me, stand by me, behold my deeds this day,  
 Whether all day long I shall play the dastard, as thou dost say, 180  
 Or if haply some Danaan's might, be he never so furious-fain,  
 I shall quench, that he fight no more defending Patroclus slain."

Then high o'er the roar of the battle his shout to the Trojans rose :  
 "Trojans and Lycians and Dardans in grapple of conflict who close,  
 Quit you like men, my friends, and remember your stormy might, 185  
 Till I don the mail of Achilles the princely, the harness bright  
 Which I stripped from the slain when I slew Patroclus the warrior wight."

So did he speak, and Hector the stormy-crested passed  
 Forth of devouring war, and with swift feet following fast  
 His comrades full soon overtook, for by this not afar had they gone 190

Citywards bearing the glorious armour of Peleus' son.  
 And aloof from the dolorous fight did he change his warrior-gear.  
 His own gave he to the battle-revelling Trojans to bear  
 Unto Ilium the holy, but he put on that mail god-wrought  
 Of Achilles Peleus' son, which the Heaven-abiders had brought 195  
 Unto Peleus his sire, and in hoar age gave he the same to his son.  
 But the son in his father's armour to hoar hairs never won.

Now when Zeus the Cloudrack-gatherer marked that hero from far  
 Arraying himself in godlike Peleides' harness of war,  
 Sadly he shaketh his head, and unto his heart he saith : 200

" Ah wretch, but in all thy thoughts there is no foreboding of death  
 Which is nigh thee, even at the door, but thou donnest the heavenly mail  
 Of a man most mighty, before whose face all others quail.  
 His comrade gentle and stalwart dead on the earth thou hast laid,  
 And his shoulders and head of his armour hast vilely disarrayed. 205  
 Yet now will I give great might unto thee, and so shall be paid  
 Thy requital for this, that thou shalt not return when the battle is done  
 Nor Andromachê take at thine hands the armour of Peleus' son."

And Kronion's dark brows bent, and he sealed that promise fast.  
 And the harness fitted itself unto Hector, and into him passed 210  
 Arês the terrible War-god : his limbs within were filled  
 With prowess and strength : and he came, and his mighty war-cry thrilled  
 His battle-renowned allies ; and he seemed to them all to behold,  
 As he flashed in the harness, very Peleides the mighty-souled. [215  
 And he came unto man after man, and he kindled their hearts with his word,



Till Mesthles, Thersilochus, Medon, and Glaukus took fire as they heard,  
 And Hippothoüs, Asteropaius, Deisēnor withal, were stirred,  
 And Phorkys, and Chromius, and Ennomus seer of the augury-bird :  
 These roused he to battle, as fast on their ears his winged words fell :

“ Hearken, ye tribes untold of the nations around us that dwell ! 220

It is nowise for longing or lack of a mighty war-array

That hither from tower and town I have called you from far away,

But that ye may deliver the Trojans' wives and their little ones,

Fighting with willing hands, from Achaia's war-fain sons.

With suchlike intent for your gifts and your meat I consume the store 225

Of my folk, and make mighty the hearts of you all with the gifts I outpour.

Wherefore let each man turn him about, or to perish forthright,

Or be saved alive, for this is the winsome dalliance of fight !

And whoso shall hale Patroclus, dead though he lie on the field,

To the horse-quelling Trojans, and cause yon Aias the prey to yield, 230

The half of the spoils unto him will I render, and half of the same

Shall be mine, and great as mine own shall be that man's honour and fame.”

So spake he, and full on the Danaans charged they with might and main

Uplifting their spears, and their hearts with the hope were exceeding fain

Of tearing the corpse of the dead from Aias Telamon's son. 235

Fools !—many a man of his life bereft did he cast thereon.

But to prince Menelaus the battle-helper did Aias say :

“ O brother, O nurtured of Zeus, Menelaus, I dare not to-day

Have hope that forth of the war we shall yet return, we twain.

Yet not so much fear I for the corpse of Patroclus slain, 240

Which haply shall yet glut vultures and dogs on the Trojan plain,  
As sorely I fear for my very life, lest this be my bane,  
And for thine, for the compassing cloud of war is darkening near,  
Even Hector, and dawneth upon us destruction sudden and sheer.  
But call thou the Danaan chieftains, if haply any may hear."

245

He spake, Menelaus the battle-helper hearkened to do,  
And he cried to the chiefs with a voice that pierced the war-din through :

"O friends, ye lords of the Argives, chiefs of their mighty ones,  
Who beside Menelaus and King Agamemnon, Atreus' sons,  
Drink of the wine of the King, and in battle give command  
To your folk, and with worship and honour are crowned from Zeus's hand—  
Hard is it for me each several man of the chiefs to discern,  
So mighty a fury of battle-strife doth around us burn ;  
But unbidden let each man come, and indignation-stung  
That Patroclus to dogs of the Trojans should be for their banqueting flung."

250

255

Then quickly did Aias hear him, Oileus' fleetfoot seed,  
And foremost he ran through the strife, and came to meet him with speed.  
Idomeneus next, and Idomeneus' henchman-charioteer,  
Mêriones, the manslaying War-god's battle-peer.

But of all the rest, what man of his wit could name each name  
Of the host of Achaians that followed and kindled the battle-flame ?

260

Onward the Trojans hurled in a dense throng, Hector led.  
And as when at the mouth of a river by rains from heaven fed  
Roareth the tide against the stream, and on either hand  
Echo the cliffs as bursteth the sea-surge down on the strand ;

265

So loud was the yell of the charging Trojans : but steadfastly stood  
The Achaïans around Menoitius' son with one stern mood  
By the brazen bucklers hedged. And around them and overhead  
On the glittering helms dense mist did the son of Kronos shed.  
For neither aforetime Menoitius' child in his sight was abhorred, 270  
While yet he lived, and was henchman to Aiakus' son, his lord ;  
So now, that the dogs of the Trojans should rend him limb from limb  
He endured not, wherefore he roused up his comrades to battle for him.  
Now the Trojans first thrust back the Achaïans flashing-eyed,  
And forsaking the corpse they recoiled, howbeit not one of them died 275  
On the spears of the haughty Trojans, though fain of the slaughter were they ;  
Yet fell they to haling the corpse. But aloof the Achaïans would stay  
Naught but a moment's space, for that rallied they were full soon  
By Aias, the man that in deeds and in goodlihead outshone  
All men of the Danaan host, save Peleus' peerless child. 280  
Through the forefighters rushed he like to a fierce boar tameless-wild,  
By whom mid the mountains the hounds and the young men stalwart and stout  
Lightly be scattered, through forest-glades as he wheeleth about ;  
So glorious Aias, lordly Telamon's son, that day  
Turned on his foes, and lightly scattered the Trojan array, 285  
As around Patroclus they swarmed, sore longing their hearts within  
To hale him away to their city, and high renown to win.  
Now Hippothoüs, scion of Lêthus, of famous Pelasgian strain,  
Forth of the desperate fray by the foot was haling the slain ;  
By his ankle around the sinews his baldric-belt had he bound 290

For a kindness to Hector and Troytown's folk. But swiftly he found  
His doom, there was none to save, were they never so eager-hearted,  
For Aias Telamon's son through the midst of the war-press darted  
And stabbed through his morion brazen-checked with a thrust from anear,  
And the helmet heavily-maned crashed round the point of the spear 295  
At the shock of the mighty lance by his brawny hand on-spied,  
And the brain through the crest-socket rushed from the wound all bloody-red.  
Forthright was his strength unstrung, and he dropped from his nerveless hold,  
To fall to the ground, the foot of Patroclus the mighty-souled.  
And he fell down hard thereby : on his face on the corpse was he laid, 300  
Far off from Larissa the fruitful : the nursing-debt never he paid  
To the parents that loved him so well, but short was the span of his life  
By the spear of Aias the mighty of heart overthrown in the strife.  
Then Hector at Aias hurled with his javelin glittering bright ; [flight 305  
But with swift keen glance looking forward he swerved from the path of its  
But a little: yet great-heart Iphitus' son did the lance dash down,  
Schedius, bravest of Phocians : in Panopeus' far-famed town  
Were his stately halls, and he ruled over people not a few.  
To the midst of his collar-bone leapt that lance ; clear-cleaving through  
'Neath his shoulder the brazen point of the spear shot forth into view. 310  
And he fell with a crash, and clanged above him his battle-gear.  
And Phorkys the war-wise, Phainops' son, by Aias' spear  
Was stabbed through the midst of the belly, bestriding Hippothous dead ;  
And his corslet's hollow was rent, by the brass were the bowels outshed ;  
And he fell in the dust fierce-clutching the earth in his agony-throe. 315



Back faltered the foremost, yea, Hector the glorious shrank from the foe.  
 Loud shouted the Argives, and forth of the press those slain did they hale,  
 Hippothoüs and Phorkys, and stripped from their shoulders the gory mail.

Then by the Arês-beloved Achaïans the Trojan men  
 Had been driven in craven flight through Ilium's gates again, 320  
 And even beyond Zeus' doom had the Argives won them fame  
 By their might and their strength : but Apollo himself to Aeneas came,  
 For he fashioned himself as a man, and Periphas' form he bore,  
 The herald Êpytus' son : with his father the ancient-hoar  
 Grey grew he in herald-service, in love and in loyal faith. 325  
 His semblance Apollo the child of Zeus hath ta'en, and he saith :

"Aeneas, how should ye save in despite of a God's decree  
 Steep Ilium?—sooth ere now hath it happed to me heroes to see [essayed,  
 Which in trust in their manhood and prowess and strength such deed have  
 And with help of a mighty war-host, a people unafraid ; 330  
 But we—'tis to us Zeus willeth the victory more by far  
 Than our foes : 'tis yourselves are exceeding afraid, and ye shrink from the war."

But Aeneas gazed in his face, and Archer Apollo he knew ;  
 And he sent unto Hector a shout that cleft the war-din through :  
 "Hector, and all ye captains of Troy and her warrior-aid, 335  
 Foul shame should it be, if thus in craven rout disarrayed  
 From the Arês-beloved Achaïans through Ilium's gates we should flee!  
 Nay, thus saith one of the Gods—yea, a God hath stood by me—  
 That Zeus the Counsel-king is our helper in battle to-day.  
 On, charge on the Danaans then!—shall no man say them nay 340

That they bear not the dead Patroclus unto their galleys away?"

He spake, and he sprang from the ranks, and alone stood far afront.  
Forthright the Trojans rallied, and faced the battle's brunt.

Then with his lance Aeneas thrust Leiokritus through,  
Arisbas' son, Lykomêdes' henchman trusty and true. 345

And Arês-beloved Lykomêdes had pity of him laid low,  
And he strode full nigh, and he hurled with his flame-bright lance at the foe,  
And Hippasus' son Apisaon he smote, a shepherd of folk,  
In the liver the midriff beneath, and the strength of his knees he broke :  
Forth to the war had he fared from Paionia's fruitful lea, 350

And next unto Asteropaius their mightiest in battle was he.  
And Asteropaius the valiant had pity of him in his plight,  
And full on the Danaans charged he with heart and with soul to fight.  
Yet naught he availed, for the Argives compassed Patroclus about  
With a shield-wall fenced, wherefrom the levelled spears stood out. 355  
For Aias to this man and that man turned him on every side—

"Let none from the corpse draw back, let no man flinch!" he cried—  
"And afront of the other Achaïans for battle let no man stand,  
But close ye around the corpse, and grapple hand to hand."

So Aias the giant commanded, and drenched was the earth the while 360  
With purple blood ; and still as they fell grew that grim pile  
Of the mingled corpses of Trojans and them of their warrior-aid ;  
Yea, and of Danaans—not without blood was resistance made :—  
Yet fewer by far of them died, for that heedful they were alway  
To shield from the down-rushing doom their fellows in that wild fray. 365

So fought they with rage as of ravening flame :—thou hadst verily said  
That the sun from the heaven had faded, the moon was utterly dead :  
For a mist brooded over the battle, and wrapped each mightiest one  
That stood in the warrior-ring round dead Menoitius' son.  
But the rest of the Trojans and goodly-greavèd Achaïans at ease 370  
In the clear air fought, and the sun's keen radiance far over these  
Was spread: over all the earth and the mountain heights was there seen  
No cloud: and aye as they fought they rested therebetween,  
Each flinching from shafts of the foemen, and standing far apart.  
But with gloom and with war-toil they that were deep in the battle's heart 375  
Were enduring affliction; their mightiest all were aweary and worn  
With the weight of their harness. Howbeit not yet had the tidings been borne  
Unto warriors twain, that dead was Patroclus the princely, but naught  
Thrasymêdes knew, nor Antilochus: nay, but still they thought  
That alive in front of the war-press against the Trojans he fought. 380  
So with keen watch still to deliver from death and from rout their array  
Aloof were they warring; for so in his hest did Nestor say  
When forth from the dark-hulled ships he sped his sons to the fray.  
So all day long the fury of that great strife waxed grim,  
And for weariness-pain with the sweat of their labour every limb 385  
Streamed without respite: from knees and from legs and from feet did it flow  
And from hands, and bedimmed were their eyes, as the fight swayed to and fro  
O'er the valiant henchman of fleetfoot Aiakus' son laid low.  
And as when to his craftsmen a currier giveth the fat-drenched hide  
Of a mighty bull, to the end they may stretch it on every side, 390

And they take it, and stretch, as around it they stand in a ring ranged wide :  
Forth oozeth the moisture thereof, the fat fast entereth in  
'Neath the strain of the many hands, and stretched throughout is the skin :  
So hitherward, thitherward, haled they the corpse with tug and strain  
In a scanty space, and with hope were their hearts exceeding fain— 395  
The Trojans, to hale him to Ilium's walls, but Achaia's host,  
To the hollow ships, and around him the surges of battle tossed  
Wildly :—though Arês the Kindler of War, though Athênê had seen,  
She had not made light of their strife, though her fury were never so keen.  
Such grievous toil o'er Patroclus of steeds and of grappling men 400  
Did Zeus strain hard that day. Howbeit naught by then  
Was known to Achilles the godlike concerning Patroclus' fall,  
For that far aloof from the galleys beneath the Trojans' wall  
Were they fighting, wherefore he never deemed in his heart that his friend  
Was dead ; but he thought that alive, when the gates he had touched, he would  
Backward again, for his heart nursed never the idle trust [wend 405  
That without him, or with him, Patroclus should lay those towers in the dust.  
For this thing oft of his mother he heard, when sat they alone,  
When the purpose of Zeus most high unto him her lips made known.  
But in that hour never a word of so heavy a woe was said 410  
By his mother, how that his friend, his best-beloved, lay dead.  
But the others around the corse with the keen-whetted spears that they bore  
Clashed evermore in the onset, and slew and slew evermore.  
And thus did Achaian to brazen-harnessed Achaian cry :  
—“ O friends, foul shame of a truth should it be if aback we should fly 415



To the hollow ships!—let the dark earth rather yearn for us all  
Even here—it were better for us by far if this should befall,  
If now we shall suffer the horse-quelling warriors of Troy to their town  
From the battle to hale this hero, and win for them triumph-renown!”

But each to his fellow the while the great-heart Trojans said : 420  
“O friends, what though we be doomed by the side of Patroclus dead  
As one man all to be slain, yet let none flinch from the fight!”

So this one and that one shouted and kindled his fellow's might.  
Even so were they battling on : the iron din of them roared  
Through the barren welkin till up to the brazen heaven it soared. 425

But the horses of Aiakus' son stood aloof from where men warred,  
Aye weeping, even from the time when they knew that their charioteer  
Was fallen in dust stricken down by manslaying Hector's spear.

Good sooth, but Automedon, stalwart son of Diôres, refrained  
Nowise his hand, but many a blow from the swift scourge rained, 430  
And with many a soft word pleading, and many a curse, he cried :

But neither aback to the galleys by broad-flowing Hellespont's side  
Would they go, nor to where the Achaians in strife still held their ground :  
But as bideth a pillar unshaken, that high on the sepulchre-mound  
Of a man or a woman doth stand, for a sign of the dead laid there, 435

So steadfastly still they abode with the chariot passing-fair,  
Low-drooping their heads to the earth, and ran from their eyes evermore  
The hot tears down to the ground as they mourned exceeding sore  
In grief for their charioteer, and in dust defiled was the pride  
Of their mane from the collar that streamed by the yoke upon either side. 440

And the son of Kronos beheld as they mourned, and was pity-stirred,  
And in sorrow shaking his head he spake to his heart the word :

“ Ah hapless, why did we give you to Peleus the king, to be  
A mortal's possession, while ageless and deathless for ever are ye ?  
Was it for this, that with wretched men ye should share their woe ? 445  
For nothing there is more misery-burdened than man, I trow,  
Of all things that breathe and that crawl on the face of the earth to and fro.  
Yet not of a surety on you and the chariot cunningly wrought  
Shall Hector the son of Priam ride : I will suffer it not.  
Sufficeth it not that the armour he hath, that he vaunteth in vain ? 450  
But with might will I thrill your knees, and your spirits my breath shall sustain,  
To the end ye may bring Automedon safe from the midst of the foe  
To the hollow galleys : for glory on Troy will I still bestow,  
To slay and to slay, until by the fair-benched ships they stand,  
And the sun go down, and the sacred dark sweep over the land.” 455

So spake he, and mettlesome might breathed through those car-steeds twain,  
And they lifted their heads, and to earth each shook the dust from his mane,  
And amidst of Achaians and Trojans the fleet car swiftly they sped.  
And behind them Automedon fought heart-anguished for him that was dead ;  
And as swoopeth a vulture on geese, with his steeds did he charge through the  
For lightly now would he flee from the turmoil of Troy's array, [fray, 460  
Now lightly he swooped on them, chasing the fleers through tangle of fight,  
Howbeit he slew of them none, whensoever he followed their flight ;  
For he might not in any wise borne alone on the sacred car  
Fall on with the spear, and rein swift steeds mid the tumult of war. 465

But at last a comrade beheld with his eyes, and was ware of his plight,  
 The son of Laerkês the scion of Haimon, Alkimedon hight :  
 And behind the chariot he stood, and thus to the prince 'gan say :

“ Automedon, which of the Gods hath set in thy breast this day  
 Profitless counsel, and stolen thy wisdom of heart away, 470  
 That thus in the forefront of battle thou fightest with Trojans alone ?  
 And thy friend, thy companion, is slain, and Hector his harness hath won,  
 And triumpheth, sheathing his shoulders in armour of Aiakus' son.”

Unto him Automedon spake, and the son of Diôres replied :  
 “ Alkimedon, who shall be like him ?—what man of Achaia beside 475  
 Can deal with the deathless horses, can tame their spirit and guide  
 Like to Patroclus, in counsel of battle the high Gods' peer, [here.  
 While he lived ?—but to-day have the death and the doom overshadowed him  
 But the whip and the glittering reins receive thou into thine hand,  
 And I from the chariot will leap, in fight against foemen to stand.” 480

He spake, and Alkimedon sprang on the chariot rescue-swift,  
 And the reins hath he grasped in haste, and the scourge doth his hand uplift.  
 But Automedon leapt to the earth. Then Hector the glorious espied ;  
 And straightway he spake to Aeneas, there as he fought by his side :

“ Aeneas, to brass-mailed Trojans a counsellor good at need, 485  
 Yonder the horses I see of Aiakus' fleetfoot seed  
 Break in on the battle, and weakling charioteers have they.  
 Now therefore, if thou in thy spirit consent, I would hope that the prey  
 Shall be ours, for they will not endure with might encountering might  
 To abide thine onset and mine, and to grapple with us in the fight.” 490

He spake, and the stalwart son of Anchises hearkened thereto.  
Straight onward they pressed, and over their shoulders their bucklers they  
Of the tough bull-hide and dry, overlaid with the massy brass ; [threw  
And beside them did twain, Arétus the godlike and Chromius, pass  
To the strife ; and their hearts beat high with hope, for they looked to slay 495  
Those charioteers, and to drive the strong-necked horses away.

Ah fools!—but it was not their weird without shedding of blood to fare  
From Automedon back. Unto Zeus Allfather he uttered his prayer,  
And with valour and strength Zeus thrilled his inmost spirit through.  
To Alkimedon straightway he spake, to his war-fellow trusty and true : 500

“ Alkimedon, far from mine helping the car-steeds stay thou not,  
But breathing hard on my back do thou rein them, for well I wot  
That Hector the son of Priam will cease not his mighty deeds  
Until he have slain us twain, and behind these fair-maned steeds  
He ride on the car of Achilles to war, and the ranks he appal 505  
Of the Argive men, or himself mid the foremost fighters fall.”

On the two Aiantes and lord Menelaus then did he call :  
“ What ho, Menelaus !—ho, chiefs of the Argives, Aiantes twain !  
Unto our mightiest men commit ye the corpse of the slain,  
To rally around it, and face the ranks of Troy's array : 510  
But us which yet be alive shield ye from the pitiless day.  
For hitherward heavily charging come through the dolorous war  
Aeneas and Hector—the mightiest men of the Trojans they are.  
Yet verily all these things on the knees of the high Gods lie :  
Let Zeus take thought for the issue, but hurl at the foe will I.” 515



He swung up the lance long-shadowed, he hurled it across the field,  
 And it smote on the midst of Arêtus' shapely-rounded shield ;  
 And the buckler withstood not the lance, but clear through burst the brass,  
 And into the nether belly cleaving the belt did it pass.  
 As a stalwart man in his grip a keen-edged axe upheaveth 520  
 And smiteth behind the horns of an ox of the steading, and cleaveth  
 Clear through the sinew, and forward it springeth, and falleth dead,  
 So forward he sprang, and he fell on his back, and the keen spear-head  
 Quivered within his bowels, that the strength of his limbs was unstrung.  
 Then at Automedon Hector his flame-bright javelin flung ; 525  
 But with keen glance looking before him he shunned that brazen spear,  
 For forward he bowed, and the lance long-shafted far to the rear  
 Plunged into the earth, and above it the spear-butt quivered in air  
 Till Arès the stormy-hearted had spent its fury there. [530  
 Then drawing the sword on rushed they, and reddened the blades had been,  
 But or ever they closed in their fury came the Aiantes between ;  
 For the cry of their comrade they heard, and they burst through the rout, and  
 And before those heroes' faces backward shrinking in fear [drew near :  
 Hector, Aeneas withal, and Chromius the godlike withdrew ;  
 And there did they leave Arêtus forlorn, with his heart pierced through, 535  
 Outstretched on the ground, and Automedon, battle-swift Arès' peer,  
 Tore from the dead his harness, and shouted the triumph-jeer :  
 " Ha, surely a little now have I eased mine heart of its pain  
 For dead Menoitius' son, though a viler than he have I slain !"  
 So spake he, and lifted on high the blood-stained spoils of the dead, 540

And cast on his chariot and mounted, with feet and with hands all red  
 With gore : as a lion he seemed on a slaughtered bull which hath fed.  
 Then over Patroclus again was the strain of the mighty fight,  
 Grievous and anguish-fraught: and adown from the heaven's height  
 Came Athênê to waken its fury : of far-seeing Zeus was she sent 545  
 To enkindle the Danaan men, for that now did his spirit repent.  
 As when from the heavens Zeus outstretched a bright-hued bow  
 In the sight of mortal men, to be for a sign, and to show  
 The on-coming of war or the wintry storm, which stayeth folk  
 On the face of the earth from their toil and afflicteth the sheep of the flock ;  
 Even so in a bright-hued cloud did Athênê veil her from sight  
 As she entered the host of Achaia and roused each warrior wight.  
 And first unto Atreus' son with enkindling words did she cry—  
 Unto strong Menelaus, for now had she marked that hero anigh—  
 With Phoinix' tireless voice, and as Phoinix she seemed to the eye : 555  
 " Upon thee, Menelaus, confusion of face and reproach shall fall,  
 If the trusty comrade of lordly Achilles beneath the wall  
 Of the Trojans be torn by the teeth of the swift hounds mangling the prey.  
 Up, bear thee stoutly, and kindle the whole host on to the fray."  
 Unto her did the lord Menelaus, the battle-helper, say : 560  
 " Grey father Phoinix the ancient of days, of this were I fain [rain.  
 That Athênê would grant to me strength, and would shield from the javelin-  
 Full blithely then for Patroclus' help would I stand by his side,  
 For mine heart with anguish exceeding was stricken in that he died.  
 But the terrible fury of fire hath Hector : he doth not stay 565

The sword's devourings : for Zeus unto him giveth glory this day."

So spake he : then did Athênê the grey-eyed Goddess rejoice  
 In that first unto her of the Gods he uplifted in prayer his voice ;  
 And the hero's arms and his knees with sudden strength she thrilled,  
 And his breast with the aweless daring of that fierce fly she filled, 570  
 Which, how often soe'er from its feast on the flesh of a man it be chased,  
 Presseth onward to bite, for it deemeth a man's blood sweet to the taste :  
 With suchlike daring the darkling chambers she filled of his heart,  
 And Patroclus' corpse he bestrode, and he hurled with his gleaming dart.  
 Now a man there was of the Trojans, Podês, Eëtion's son, 575  
 Wealthy and brave, and dearer to Hector's soul was there none  
 Mid the folk, for in field and in feastful hall his companion he was.  
 On his belt Menelaus the bright-haired smote with the leaping brass,  
 As flightward he darted, and drave the head of the lance clear through :  
 Down-crashing he fell ; and Atreus' son Menelaus drew 580  
 From the foe to the host of his friends the body of him that he slew.

But Apollo to Hector's side to enkindle his might drew near  
 In the likeness of Phainops Asius' son, whom he held most dear  
 Of all bond-friends ; and his halls in Abydos stood by the sea ;  
 So seemed Far-smiter Apollo to Hector, and thus spake he : 585

" Hector, what other Achaian hereafter shall tremble at thee ?  
 What, man, hast thou feared Menelaus ?—we knew him in days bygone  
 A spearman unhardy : but now hath he 'scaped thee, hath haled alone  
 From the midst of the Trojans a corpse, hath slain Eëtion's seed  
 Thy trusty companion Podês, in battle-brunt good at need." 590

Then dark grew Hector's soul overgloomed with the cloud of his grief;  
And in bright brass sheathed through the forefront of battle strode that chief.  
Then grasped Kronion his tasselled Aegis gleaming bright,  
And he rolled dark clouds all down Mount Ida's misty height,  
And mid lightning and crashing of thunder he shook that Aegis abroad 595  
For the triumph of Troy, and his terror the host of Achaia hath awed.

First Pênelleôs the Boeotian made beginning of flight,  
For, aye as he faced the foe, did a lance on his shoulder light,  
And grazed it, and glanced therefrom : yet scored was the bone by the spear  
Which Polydamas hurled, for, or ever he cast it, he drew full near. 600  
Then Lêrtus' wrist with a thrust of his lance did Hector smite—  
Great-hearted Alektryon's son,—and he quenched his battle-delight.  
And he knew in his heart, as around him he looked with quick scared glance,  
That in battle against the Trojans no more could he wield the lance.  
Then on rushed Hector to slay him : but forward Idomeneus pressed 605  
And hurled at his corslet, and hard by the nipple smote on his breast.  
But the long spear snapped at the socket, and shouted the Trojan men.  
And Hector hurled at Idomeneus son of Deukalion then,  
As he stood on his battle-car : yet a little erred that spear :  
But Koiranus, henchman of Mêriones, and his charioteer, 610  
Who had followed his lord to the war from his fair-built Lyktian home—  
For afoot at the first from the wave-rocked ships had Idomeneus come,  
And unto the Argives a mighty triumph now had he given,  
But Koiranus unto his aid the fleet steeds swiftly hath driven ;  
For a light of deliverance he came, for his shield from the pitiless day ; 615



But for this was his own life yielded for manslaying Hector's prey :—  
Him smote he : the head of the lance, as it crashed beneath jawbone and ear,  
Dashed from their sockets the teeth, and the midst of his tongue cleft sheer ;  
And he fell from the car, and the reins streamed earthward as water is shed.  
Then Mêriones stooped swiftly, and caught from the grasp of the dead 620  
The reins in his hands from the plain, and thus to Idomeneus said :

“ Now scourge thou the horses, until to the sea-swift ships thou hast won.  
Thou knowest thyself that Achaia's day of triumph is done.”  
He spake, and Idomeneus lashed the fair-maned steeds, that they sped  
To the hollow ships, for there fell on his soul overmastering dread. 625  
Then Aias the mighty-hearted and prince Menelaus discerned  
How Zeus to the children of Troy the tide of victory turned.  
And great Telamonian Aias cried to his war-fellows there :

“ Lo, now might any man know, how witless soever he were,  
That Father Zeus himself is helping the Trojans' need. 630  
For the shafts of them all strike home to the mark, whosoever doth speed,  
Be he hero or weakling : Zeus guideth aright the flight of them all.  
But for us, all vainly to earth doth the shaft of each man fall.  
Nay, come then, devise we ourselves what counsel best shall avail  
Whereby we shall rescue the corpse, and ourselves from the battle's bale 635  
Alive shall return, for a joy to the comrades that hold us dear,  
Which be hitherward gazing in anguish of heart, and they say in their fear  
That Hector the manslayer's might and resistless hands shall droop  
Never, nor faint, till down on the black-hulled galleys he swoop.  
Now would there were one of our comrades with uttermost speed to bear 640

Tidings to Peleus' son, for I ween he is nowise ware  
Of the woeful tale, that his dear-loved friend is dead this day.  
Howbeit such man can I nowise discern mid Achaia's array :  
For in gloom are they shrouded around, even they and their steeds withal.  
Zeus, Father, yet save thou Achaia's sons from beneath its pall, 645  
And make clear day, and vouchsafe unto us with our eyes to see !  
So it be but in light, destroy us !—since this is well-pleasing to thee."

He spake, and Allfather was moved with compassion for him as he wept ;  
And he straightway scattered the gloom, and the mist aside hath he swept.  
And the sun shone down, and revealed was the battle far and wide. 650  
Then Aias to prince Menelaus the battle-helper cried :

" Gaze forth, Menelaus, O fostered of Zeus, if thou yet mayst behold  
Antilochus living, the son of Nestor the mighty-souled ;  
And speed him to hasten away to Achilles the battle-fain  
To tell unto him that his friend, his best-beloved, is slain." 655

He spake, Menelaus the battle-helper said him not nay,  
But he hied him, as when from a steading a lion turneth away  
Which is wearied with vexing the herdmen that shout, and the hounds that bay,  
As they watch through the livelong night, neither suffer the forest-king  
To seize on the choice of the herd, but for flesh mad-hungering 660  
Ever on them he rusheth, yet naught he prevaieth, so thick and fast  
Leap in his face the darts by the hands undaunted cast,  
And the blazing brands that he dreadeth, how furious-fain soe'er,  
Till at dawn sore chafing and grudging in spirit aback must he fare :  
Even so Menelaus the battle-helper turned to depart 665

From Patroclus exceeding loth, for that sorely he feared in his heart  
 Lest in ruinous rout the Achaians should leave him the foemen's prey.  
 And he charged the Aiantes twain, and to Mëriones did he say :

“ Aiantes, ye chiefs of the Argives, and Mëriones hear thou :  
 Remember Patroclus the hapless, forget not his kindliness now ; 670  
 For to all was he courteous-hearted, to all was he gracious-willed  
 While he lived : but his doom hath o'ertaken him now, and death hath stilled.”

So spake Menelaus the golden-haired, and he hied him away,  
 On all sides glancing as glanceth the eagle, the which, men say,  
 Is keenest of sight of all winged things through the welkin that fly : 675  
 For, aloft though he soar, yet a fleet-footed hare can escape not his eye,  
 Though she crouch 'neath a bush embowering : with swoop unerring descendeth  
 The eagle, and seizeth, and swiftly the life from the quarry he rendeth :  
 So then, O fostered of Zeus, Menelaus, thy bright eyes scanned  
 The countless host of thy friends, far ranging on every hand : 680  
 For the child of Nestor, if haply he lived, ever keenly they sought.  
 And he suddenly spied where afar on the left of the battle he fought,  
 And kindled his fellows' courage, and cheered them on to the fray.  
 Then drew Menelaus nigh, and the bright-haired prince 'gan say :

“ Hither, Antilochus fostered of Zeus, to the end thou mayst hear— 685  
 Would God it had never befallen !—tidings woeful-drear.  
 Even now art thou ware, I ween, for thine own eyes surely behold,  
 How God on the Danaan men a tide of trouble hath rolled,  
 And for Troy there is triumph :—but slain is the best of Achaia's host,  
 Patroclus, and sore is the Danaans' grief for their champion lost, 690

Thou, haste to Achilles, run to the galleys Achaian, and there  
Tell it, if haply the corpse he will save to his galley to bear  
All naked : his armour doth Hector the stormy-crested wear."

He spake, and Antilochus shuddered to hear that word of woe :  
Long time did speechlessness hold him, with tears did his eyes overflow, 695  
And choked was his voice, for his throat in the grip of anguish was caught.  
Yet not even so did he set Menelaus' behest at naught ;  
But he turned him to run, and he gave to a comrade his corslet and shield,  
To Laodokus, hard by his side as his thunderfoot horses he wheeled.  
So weeping forth of the battle with hurrying feet is he gone 700  
To bear that evil tale to Achilles Peleus' son.

Yet, O Menelaus, thou fostered of Zeus, it was not in thine heart  
To champion the Pylians sorely bestead when they saw him depart,  
Antilochus : yea, and with grief for his loss were the hearts of them rent.  
Yet a man for their help, Thrasymêdes the godlike, Atreides sent. 705  
But himself hath hasted back unto hero Patroclus' side ;  
To the two Aiantes he ran, and with eager haste he cried :

"Lo, yonder man have I sped to the sea-swift galleys to go,  
Unto fleetfoot Achilles : howbeit not now will he come, I trow,  
How fiercely soe'er against Hector the fire of his wrath may glow, 710  
For that fenceless he may not in any wise fight with the Trojan foe.  
But let us bethink us now what counsel best shall avail,  
Whereby we shall rescue the corpse, and deliver our souls from bale,  
From the death that rideth the storm of the yell of the Trojan men."

And great Telamonian Aias answering spake to him then : 715



"Menelaus the far-renowned, well spoken is this thy rede.  
 Thou therefore and Mêriones bow down your shoulders with speed,  
 And uplift ye the dead, and bear from the strife, and behind you aye  
 Yon Trojans and Hector the godlike will we twain hold in play.  
 One name, one spirit have we: yea, oft in the days overpast 720  
 Shoulder to shoulder against grim battle have we stood fast."

He spake, and they clasped in their arms the dead, and uplifted on high  
 From the earth with a mighty heave, and behind them a wild fierce cry  
 Burst from the Trojans which saw the Achaians uplifting the slain.  
 Down charged they upon them, as hounds that are darting furious-fain 725  
 In front of the hunter youths on a javelin-stricken boar ;  
 For now fierce-eager to rend him rush they on before,  
 But anon, when he turneth upon them in pride of his aweless might,  
 Backward they shrink, and to this side and that side they scatter in flight :  
 Even so for a season the Trojans pursued them in serried array, 730  
 With swinging blades, and with spears two-headed thrusting aye ;  
 But when the Aiantes twain turned on them and stood at bay,  
 Then faded the blood from their faces, was none but was sorely adread  
 Afront of his fellows to leap, and to battle to win the dead.

Even so from the heart of the war to the hollow ships these twain 735  
 Stern-striving bare the corpse, and against them the battle's strain  
 Waxed ever fierce, as a fire which hath swooped on a peopled town,  
 And with sudden upleaping blazeth : the dwellings are crumbling down  
 Mid the mighty glare, and roareth upon it the wind's wild blast ;  
 So ceaseless the din of the steeds and the spearmen following fast 740

Maddened around them, as on through the whirlwind of war they passed.  
But the heroes, as mules that bend to the labour their sinewy might,  
As adown a rugged track they hale from the mountain's height  
A beam or a huge ship-timber, and spent are their spirits the while,  
As onward they press, with the sweat of their labour, the strain of their toil: 745  
So these bare onward the corpse stern-striving: behind them still  
The Aiantes stayed the foe, as the ridge of a forest-clad hill  
Stayeth the waters, a rampart across the plain stretched far;  
Yea, even the mighty rivers' ruinous floods doth it bar,  
And over the plain wide-wandering turneth the course of them all, 750  
Nor availeth the might of their onrush to breach that Titan wall:  
So on the Aiantes still Troy's surges of battle burst, [first  
And were hurled back ever: yet onward they pressed; and amidst them the  
Were Aeneas Anchises' son, and Hector the glory-crowned.  
And even as cometh a cloud of starlings or daws with the sound 755  
Of a ghastly shriek, what time looking forward afar they are ware  
Of a hawk, the bearer of death to the lesser fowl of the air;  
Even so from Aeneas and Hector the sons of Achaia in flight  
Went yelling a ghastly yell, and forgot the battle's delight.  
And much fair armour on this side the trench and on that side was strown 760  
As from Danaans fleeing it fell; and respite from war was there none.

## BOOK XVIII.

*Of the armour the Fire-god fashioned at Thetis' prayer for Achilles.*

**S**O fought they on with the ravening fury of blazing flame ;  
But Antilochus unto Achilles, a fleetfoot messenger, came.  
And he found him, and lo, in front of the tall-horned galleys he was,  
Foreboding within his soul even that which had come to pass ;  
For sorely disquieted unto his high-souled spirit he spoke : 5  
“ Ah me ! now wherefore again do Achaia's long-haired folk  
Stream back to the galleys in panic and huddled confusion of rout ?  
Dark broodeth a fear on my soul—have the Gods now brought it about  
As my mother revealed in the days overpast ?—for she told me then  
That, while I yet was alive, the best of the Myrmidon men 10  
By the hands of the Trojans down from the light of the sun should be sped.  
Surely, ah surely, Menoitius' stalwart son is dead !  
Ah headstrong !—I bade him, when back he had thrust the fire of our foes,  
To return to the galleys, and nowise in battle with Hector to close.”  
Even as thus in his heart and his spirit he pondered thereon, 15

Came to the hero's presence lordly Nestor's son,  
And the tidings of anguish he told, fast shedding the scalding tear :

“ Ah me, thou scion of Peleus the war-wise, a tale must thou hear  
Most woeful : would God it had never befallen, this bitter bane !  
Low lieth Patroclus, and now are they battling around the slain 20  
For the naked corse ; for his armour hath Hector the bright-helmed ta'en.”

Then a black cloud sorrow-fraught enshrouded Achilles round,  
And with both his hands upcaught he the hearth-grimed dust from the ground ;  
And he showered it adown on his head, that his goodly visage was marred,  
And his nectar-breathing tunic was flecked with the ash black-charred : 25  
And the mighty grovelled in dust, as a Titan were stretched out there.

Yea, and himself with his own hands rent and marred his hair.  
And the handmaids, the thralls that Achilles erewhile and Patroclus had won,  
Shrieked loudly in anguish of spirit, and forth of the tent did they run, [30  
And they flocked round war-wise Achilles, and smote with her hands each one  
On her breast, and beneath her the limbs of each one fainted and failed.

And overagainst them with shedding of tears Antilochus wailed,  
Grasping Achilles' hands, for his noble heart in its pain  
So groaned, that he feared lest with steel he should shear his throat in twain.  
And he cried with an awful cry, and his mother the Sea-queen heard 35

As she sat by the Ancient her sire in the sea-depths : anguish-stirred  
Shrieked she thereat, and gathered around her the nymphs divine,  
Even all the daughters of Nereus that dwelt in abysses of brine.

Came Glauké, Thaleia, and hasted Kymodoké therebeside ;  
Nesaia, and Speio, and Thoê, and Haliê lovely-eyed, 40



Aktaia, Kymothoê, Limnôreia the maid of the mere,  
 Iaira, and Melitê, Amphithoê, and Agavê were there :  
 Doto, Pherusa, and Proto, Dynamenê came at her call ;  
 Dexamenê, Amphinomê, and Kallianeira withal :  
 And with Doris and Panopê came Galateia the song-renowned ; 45  
 And there were Nemertes, Apseudes, and Kallianassa found :  
 Ianeira, and Oreithyia, and Klymenê thitherward pressed ;  
 Ianassa, and Maira withal, Amatheia the lovely-tressed,  
 And other the daughters of Nereus in depths of the brine that abide.  
 Thronged was the shimmering cavern, and echoed from side to side 50  
 As they smote on their bosoms ; and Thetis began the lamenting, and cried :  
 “ List, Nereïd sisters mine, to the end that ye all may know,  
 When ye hear of the sorrows that fill mine heart, and the burden of woe.  
 Ah me ! ah hapless me, who bare to my sorrow the best,  
 Who brought forth a son so noble, and nursed the strong at my breast, 55  
 The peerless mid heroes, whose stature up like a sapling shot,  
 And I nurtured him even as a plant in a fruitful garden-plot,  
 Till in beakèd galleys I sent him forth to the Ilian shore  
 To fight with the Trojans : but him shall I welcome home never more  
 In Peleus’ palace-halls, when the home-return is won. 60  
 Nay, yet while he liveth before me, and seeth the light of the sun,  
 He hath sorrow, and naught may I help, what though for his aid I draw near.  
 Yet will I go to behold my belovèd son, and to hear  
 What grief hath o’ertaken him, though from the battle aloof he abide.” [65  
 So spake she, and forth of the cavern she went, and the nymphs at her side

Went weeping, and round them was cloven asunder the surge of the sea.  
So when they were come unto Troy, the land of the fruitful lea,  
One after one stepped forth on the beach, where the thronged array  
Of the Myrmidon galleys to right and to left of Achilles lay.

And, as deeply he groaned, the Lady his mother stood by his side, 70  
And clasping her brave son's head with a shriek far-ringings she cried :  
And she mourned over him, and lamented, and spake the wingèd word :

“ Son, why dost thou weep?—with what manner of grief is thy spirit stirred?  
Speak, hide it not from me :—in sooth, one thing is accomplished to-day  
Of Zeus, even all thy desire, when with lifting of hands thou didst pray 75  
That all Achaia's sons by the sterns of the ships should be pent  
For lack of thine help, and with anguish and shame to the earth should be bent.”

Then heavily groaned fleet-footed Achilles, and answered he :  
“ My mother, this the Olympian King hath accomplished for me.  
But wherein is my comfort thereof, since dead is the friend of my love, 80  
Even Patroclus, the man that I honoured all others above,  
Yea, as myself. I have lost him. 'Twas Hector that slew him, and tare  
From his body mine armour, a marvel to look on, unearthly-fair,  
The mail that the Gods upon Peleus bestowed, a gift of pride,  
On the day whereon they constrained thee to couch by a mortal's side. 85  
Would God that then with the deathless Nymphs of the Sea thou hadst stayed  
Far off, and that Peleus had taken to wife a mortal maid !  
But now was it done, that on thy soul also measureless pain  
Should fall for thy perished child, whom thou never shalt welcome again  
As home I return ; for my spirit commandeth in vengeance-thirst 90

That I live not, nor tarry midst men, except this Hector first,  
Stricken to death by my spear, his soul amid blood outshed,  
And requite me for blood of Menoitius' son, for Patroclus dead."

Then Thetis with tears fast-flowing answered her son, and she said :  
" Ah, swift shall thy doom be, my son, by this that thou sayest to me, 95  
For that straightway after Hector is death ready-dight for thee."

Then sorely disquieted fleetfoot Achilles made reply :  
" May I die straightway, forasmuch as it was not to be that I  
Should defend at his slaying my friend : far, far from his fatherland-home  
He perished, and me he lacked to shield his life from doom ! 100  
But now—for I shall not return to the dear home-land again,  
And was not to Patroclus a light of life, nor to those true men,  
My comrades, the multitudes slain by Hector like to a God,  
But I sit by the galleys a load on the earth, a cumbering clod,  
Though like unto me is there none the brass-clad Achaians among 105  
In battle, albeit in council be others more cunning of tongue :—  
O that contention might perish from men and the Dwellers in Heaven,  
And anger, whereby into fury even the wise is driven,  
Which, sweeter by far than the trickling gold from the honeycomb shed,  
In the breasts of men like smoke doth subtly gather and spread, 110  
As the wrath that the King of Men, Agamemnon, hath kindled in me.  
Yet the past will I leave to be past, how anguished soever I be,  
Curbing the soul in my breast by the might of Necessity :—  
But now will I go, that on him who destroyed my beloved I may light,  
Hector, and death will I welcome, whenso it seemeth right 115

Unto Zeus and the rest of the deathless Gods that mine hour shall come.  
For I ween not even the might of Hêrakles 'scaped his doom,  
Albeit the dearest of all men to Zeus Kronion he was ;  
But his weird and the malice of Hêrê brought his destruction to pass.  
Thus also shall I, if a weird is ordained for me like unto his, 120  
Lie low, when I perish. But glorious fame let me win ere this,  
And on some deep-bosomed daughter of Troy and of Dardanus lay  
A burden of ceaseless lamenting, to moan and to wipe away  
With both her trembling hands from her dainty cheeks the tear,  
And cause her to know that from war o'erlong have I tarried here. 125  
Then hinder me not of thy love from the fight, for I may not obey."

Unto him did the Goddess Thetis the Silver-footed say :  
"Yea, sooth is the word thou hast said, my child, it were no ill deed  
To shield from swift destruction thy friends in the hour of their need.  
Yet amidst of the Trojans lieth thy fair-wrought battle-gear ; 130  
Thy flashing armour of brass doth Hector rejoicing wear  
On his shoulders—Hector the stormy-crested : but this say I,  
Not long shall he vaunt him therein, for his death is now hard by.  
But thou from the toil of the War-god yet for a little refrain  
Until with thine eyes thou behold me hitherward faring again. 135  
For at dawn will I come, yea, even as riseth the sun o'er the land  
With fair-fashioned harness of fight from Hephaistus the King in mine hand."

So spake she, and backward she turned from her son, the valiant and stout ;  
And she spake to her sisters, the Maids of the Sea, as she turned her about :

"Into the sea's broad-heaving bosom now plunge ye, 140



To behold the halls of your father, the Ancient of the Sea,  
And to tell to him all these things : but to high Olympus I fare,  
To Hephaistus the craft-renowned, if perchance he will grant my prayer  
To give to my son war-harness, a glory of flashing light."

She spake, and beneath the surge of the sea did they plunge forthright. 145  
But the Goddess Thetis of silver feet to Olympus is gone  
With purpose to bear that glorious mail to her dear-loved son.

So her to Olympus her feet bare on. But Achaia's rout  
From Hector the manslayer's face with yell and unearthly shout  
Fleeing, were come to the galleys and Hellespont's rushing wave. 150

Yea, the Achaians goodly-greaved had availed not to save  
From the javelins Achilles' henchman, the corpse of Patroclus slain  
For the host of the foe and the charging steeds overtook him again,  
And Hector the son of Priam, in prowess as blazing fire.

Thrice Hector the glorious grasped his feet, in his fierce desire 155  
To hale him away, and with great voice cried to the Trojan folk :  
And thrice the Aiantes twain, with fierce might clad as a cloak,

Dashed him aback from the corpse, but in pride of his strength pressing on  
Now through the battle-turmoil upon them he leapt, and anon  
Stood firm, nor shrank one whit, while rang his mighty yell. 160

And as wold-abiders can drive not a lion of tawny fell  
From his quarry, a slaughtered sheep, when he hungereth sore for the prey ;  
Even so these warriors twain, the Aiantes, could scare not away  
Hector, nor cause to flee from the body Priam's son.

And now had he haled it thence, and renown beyond words had he won, 165

Except unto Peleus' child there had come from Olympus' height  
Swift Iris the wind-foot messenger rushing to rouse him to fight,  
Unwares unto Zeus and the rest of the Gods, but of Hêrê sped.  
And she came to his side, and she uttered the winged word-flight, and she said :

“ Up, scion of Peleus, thou of the sons of men most dread ! 170

Up for Patroclus' defending, for whose sake terrible strife  
Is afoot by the galleys, and foeman is spilling foeman's life,  
These, round the corpse of the slain man ranged for a battle-fence,  
And those, the children of Troy on-storming to drag him thence  
Unto Ilium the windy : and Hector the glorious more than they all 175  
Lusteth to hale him : his spirit hath bidden him set on the wall,  
On the stakes thereof, that head by his sword from the smooth neck shorn.  
Up then ! lie still no more : let thy soul think shame and scorn  
That Patroclus to hounds of Troy should be made a ravin-delight,  
And to thee a reproach, if his corse shall suffer foul despite.” 180

But fleetfoot Achilles the godlike answered her doubtfully :

“ O Goddess Iris, now which of the Gods hath sent thee to me ? ”

Then unto him spake Iris the swift, and the Wind-foot replied :  
“ It was Hêrê that sped my flight, even Zeus's glorious bride :  
And Kronos' son high-throned naught knoweth, nor any beside 185  
Of the Deathless that high on Olympus the snow-overmantled abide.”

Then unto her did Achilles the fleetfoot answering say :

“ But how shall I enter the fight ?—my battle-gear have they ;  
And my mother hath given command that I go not forth to the fray  
Until such time as mine eyes shall behold her again stand here. 190

For she pledged her to bring from Hephaistus beautiful battle-gear.  
And I know not any beside whose glorious arms I could don,  
Except it were haply the buckler of Aias Telamon's son.  
Howbeit himself, I ween, in the forefront of battle is found,  
And for dead Patroclus' sake doth his spear deal death around." 195

But wind-foot Iris the swift made answer, and thus spake she :  
" Well know we too that thy glorious arms be withheld from thee.  
Yet go as thou art to the trench, and appear in the Trojans' sight,  
If perchance they will quail before thee, and backward shrink from the fight ;  
And the warrior sons of Achaia shall gain, when sore distressed, 200  
A breathing-space, though scant be the battle's respite or rest."

So answered him fleetfoot Iris, and out of his sight she passed.  
But Achilles the Zeus-beloved sprang up, and Athênê cast  
About his mighty shoulders her aegis tassel-hung,  
And around his head that Goddess divine a cloud-wreath flung 205  
Golden, and kindled a flame therefrom far-flashing its light.  
And as when from a city a smoke goeth up to the welkin's height  
From afar, from an island, when round it the leaguer of battle doth close,  
And her folk all day in the terrible strife contend with their foes  
From the wall of their city, until at the last with the sun's down-going 210  
Blaze forth the beacons arow ; uprusheth the glare red-glowing,  
High-soaring over the dark, that the dwellers around may espy,  
If they haply will sail in their galleys to save them from doom drawn nigh :  
Even so from the head of Achilles the glare went up to the sky.  
And he strode from the wall to the trench, and he stood, yet not to the rest 215

Of the host of Achaia he joined him, but heeded his mother's behest.  
There stood he and shouted, and Pallas Athênê from far away  
Uttered her voice, and she thrilled the Trojans with sore dismay.  
And even as pealeth the clear-ringing cry, when the war-horns sound  
Of the life-devouring foes that beleaguer a city round, 220  
Even so did the voice of Aiakus' son peal loud and clear ;  
And the brazen voice of Aiakus' son did the foemen hear,  
And shaken was each man's soul : and the horses of beautiful mane  
Backward swerved with the cars, for their spirit boded bane.  
And scared were the charioteers that tireless flame to behold 225  
That dread blaze over the head of Peleides the mighty-souled  
Glaring ; for kindled it was of Athênê the flashing-eyed.  
Thrice mightily over the trench Achilles the godlike cried,  
And the Trojans thrice, and their war-aid, reeled in disarray.  
Then in that hour twelve mightiest men did the terror slay, 230  
By their own cars crushed, by their own spears pierced. But exceeding fain  
From beneath the darts the Achaians drew Patroclus slain.  
On a litter they laid him, and round him his loving comrades pressed  
Mourning, and fleetfoot Achilles followed the dead with the rest,  
Shedding the hot-gushing tears, beholding his comrade true, 235  
As there on the bier he lay, with the keen-whetted brass pierced through.  
Ah surely forth had he sent him with steeds and battle-car,  
But he welcomed him never again returning aback from the war.  
And the tireless sun did the Lady Hêrê the lovely-eyed  
Send to return full loth to the Ocean-stream's swift tide. 240



So the sun went down to his rest, and the godlike Achaians refrained  
 From the mighty labour of strife and the battle equal-strained.  
 And overagainst them the children of Troy from the mighty fray  
 Drew back, and the fleetfoot steeds from the chariot-yoke loosed they.  
 And in council they met, ere any his meat of the even prepared. 245  
 And behold, all stood on their feet in the council, was none that dared  
 Sit down, for that trembling gat hold on them all for that dread sight  
 Of Achilles' appearing, when long he had ceased from the bitter fight.  
 And Polydamas, Panthoüs' wise-heart son, first uttered his rede,  
 Who alone to the deed overpast and the deed unborn gave heed. 250  
 Companion of Hector he was, and was born in the selfsame night,  
 But better in speechcraft was this, and that in the spearman's might ;  
 And with kindly intent he harangued them, and thus to their host 'gan cry :  
 " Bethink ye of both ways well, O friends :—thus counsel I,  
 That back to the city we wend, neither tarry the dawn of day 255  
 In the plain by the galleys : behold, the wall is far away.  
 So long as against Agamemnon the anger of this man glowed,  
 More lightly the onset then of Achaia's host we abode :  
 For I too then through the night with joy by the galleys lay  
 Flushed with the hope of winning the sea-swayed ships for a prey. 260  
 But at fleetfoot Achilles now do I tremble exceedingly,  
 So dauntless, so fierce is the spirit of him : he will deign not, he,  
 To abide in the plain where Achaian and Trojan heretofore  
 Foeman with foe in the midspace shared the fury of war :  
 Nay, but to win our town and our wives will Achilles contend. 265

But hearken to me : go we to the city ; for thus shall it end :—  
Now naught save the night hath held back Peleus' fleetfoot son,  
The balmy night : but if here he shall find us lingering on,  
When tomorn in his armour he rusheth forth, I ween there be some  
Shall know him full well ; for with joy unto Ilium the holy shall come 270  
Whosoe'er shall escape ; and many a Trojan shall vultures devour  
And dogs—ah, far from mine ear be the tale of such terrible hour !  
But and if ye will hearken and heed my words, howsoever we chafe, [be safe :  
Through the night in assembly our strength shall we keep, and our town shall  
By her towers and her high-built gates with the massy planks overlaid, 275  
Long, polished, and morticed close, shall triumphant resistance be made.  
And tomorn, in the twilight of dawn, sheathed all in our war-array  
Will we stand on the towers : he shall fare full ill, if he then shall essay  
From the galleys to come, yon fenced keep from our hands to wrest.  
To the galleys aback shall he flee, when his steeds of the stately crest 280  
Shall be weary of charging in vain 'neath her ramparts everywhere.  
But his fierceness of fury shall nowise win him an entrance there :  
He shall never destroy it : ere then even him shall the swift hounds tear."

But Hector the stormy-crested answered with lowering brow :  
" Polydamas, hateful to me is this thy counsel now, 285  
Who biddest us fare to the city again, therein to be penned.  
What, man, hath our hunger for prisoning walls of towers no end ?  
Time was when the children of men of the city of Priam told,  
Of the store of her hoarded brass, of the wealth of her garnered gold :  
But now all lost from our homes those goodly treasures are ; 290

For many to Phrygia and fair Maeonia-land afar  
 Have been sold ; they are gone : for great Zeus hated us then, I trow.  
 But the Son of the Lord of Unsearchable Counsels hath granted me now  
 To win me renown at the ships, and to pen our foes on the shore ;  
 Then, fool, speak thou thine imaginings forth mid the people no more,      295  
 For thee no Trojan shall heed ; I will suffer not this to befall.  
 But come now, as I shall speak, even so be it done of us all :  
 Your supper throughout the host, as ranged be the ranks, shall ye take,  
 And set ye the watch of the night, and let each take heed that he wake.  
 And if any Trojan is troubled lest haply his wealth should be lost,      300  
 Let him gather and part mid the people, and set forth a feast for the host.  
 It were better to gladden these than to glut the Achaians' greed.  
 And to-morrow, when breaketh the dawn, sheathed all in battle-weed  
 By the hollow ships will we rouse up Arês to slaughter to speed.  
 But and if by the galleys Achilles the godlike is risen indeed,      305  
 With him shall it go full hard, if he will : I will flee not, I,  
 Before him from war death-echoing : stoutly and steadfastly  
 Will I face him : or he or I shall bear thence high renown.  
 The War-god favoureth not, but he smiteth the slayer down."  
 So Hector harangued them, and shouted thereto the Trojan array      310  
 In their folly, for Pallas Athênê had stolen their wits away,  
 That they praised the counsel of Hector, the giver of evil advice,  
 But Polydamas no man praised, albeit his rede was wise.  
 Then took they their supper throughout the host. But with groan on groan  
 All night for Patroclus dead did Achaia's sons make moan.      315

And Peleus' child in their midst the vehement wail upraised,  
The while on his comrade's breast his manslaying hands he placed,  
Uttering many a groan, as a lion of shaggy mane  
Whose whelps some hunter of stags hath snatched from his lair, and hath ta'en  
From the deep thick wood, and the lion in grief o'erlate cometh back, 320  
And through many a mountain-glen doth he prow! on the spoiler's track,  
If he haply may find him ; for fury hath seized him exceeding grim :  
So he mid the Myrmidons groaned for his comrade, and cried upon him :

“ Ah me, 'twas a vain, vain word that my lips that day let fall,  
When I cheered the ancient hero Menoitius' heart in his hall. 325  
I said that with glory to Opus again I would bring his son  
From the smiting of Troy, with a goodly share of the rich prey won.  
But Zeus fulfilleth not every thought that in man hath birth :  
For fated it was that we both should redden the selfsame earth  
In Troyland here ; for Peleus the chariot-champion hoar 330  
Shall welcome me to his halls returning home no more,  
Neither Thetis my mother, but here shall the earth close over me.  
But seeing, Patroclus, now I must pass to the grave after thee,  
I will bury thee not, or ever I hitherward bring the head  
And the armour of Hector, the proud-souled man that hath laid thee dead. 335  
Yea, and in front of thy pyre the throats will I sever in twain  
Of twelve fair children of Troy, in my wrath for my comrade slain.  
Till then even thus, as thou art shalt thou lie by the beaked ships here,  
And deep-girt daughters of Troy and of Dardanus round thy bier  
Through the nights and the days shall weep with shedding of many a tear, 340



Even they which ourselves with the long spear won, and by warrior-toil,  
When we smote rich cities of earth-born men, and gathered the spoil."

So spake Achilles the godlike, and gave to his comrades command  
To set a mighty tripod over the fire to stand,  
That with speed they should cleanse from Patroclus the clotted gore away. 345  
And the tripod of washing above the devouring fire set they :  
And they poured the water therein, and they kindled the billets below,  
And the flame coiled round it, the water grew warm in the fervent glow.  
So when in the glittering brass the water for heat 'gan boil,  
Then did they wash the corpse, and anointed it over with oil ; 350  
And the wounds of the dead did they fill with ointment fresh and sweet,  
And laid on a bier, and swathed him in linen soft, to the feet  
Even from the head, and thereover a fair white pall have they thrown.  
Then all night long round fleetfoot Achilles with groan on groan  
Over Patroclus the mourning Myrmidon men made moan. 355  
Then Zeus unto Hêrê spake, which was sister to him and bride :

"Lo now hast thou wrought thy will, Queen Hêrê the lovely-eyed,  
In uprousing Achilles the swift of foot : sooth, true must it be  
That the long-haired Achaïans were born of the very body of thee !"

But to him Queen Hêrê the lovely-eyed made answer and said : 360  
"What hast thou to do saying this, O Kronos' son most dread ?  
Even a mortal may help his fellow at need, I trow,  
A man that is born but to die, nor the wealth of our wisdom doth know.  
How then should I, who boast me chief of the daughters of Heaven,—  
Chief, by my birthright, and chief, because that to me it is given 365

To be called thy Queen, who art King over all the Deathless Ones,—  
How should I not in my wrath work woe unto Troytown's sons ? ”

So each unto other spake these twain in the heavenly home.

But Thetis Silverfoot to Hephaistus' mansion was come,  
Unperishing, star-overroofed, a peerless immortal abode, 370

All-brazen, the which himself had fashioned, the haltfoot God.

At his bellows with sweat of labour toiling was he that she sought,

Speeding the work : for in fashioning tripods twenty he wrought,

In his stately hall to stand ranged round about the wall,

And wheels of gold had he set beneath the bases of all, 375

That so of themselves to the high Gods' gathering-place they should pass,

And return to his dwelling : a marvel to see the device of them was.

And so far were they wrought, that not yet were the handles of curious mould

Set on them ; but these was he fitting, and forging him rivets of gold.

Even while thus in the spirit of wisdom laboured the God, 380

Drew nigh unto him the Goddess Thetis the silver-shod.

And the Goddess's coming Charis the gleaming-veiled espied,

The fair Nymph won by the glorious Twin-right-armed for his bride,

Then clasped she her hand in her own, and she spake, and thus did she say :

“ Why, Thetis the royally-robed, art thou come to our halls this day, 385

O worship-worthy and dear ?—not oft hast thou come hitherto.

Nay, follow, that so I may set before thee the guest-fare due.”

So when she had spoken thus, that Goddess divine led on,

And thereafter she caused her to sit on a silver-studded throne,

Fair, cunningly wrought, and beneath for her feet was a footstool laid. 390

And she cried to her lord Hephaistus the craft-renowned, and she said :

“ Come hither, Hephaistus, for Thetis hath somewhat to ask of thee.”

Then answered the glorious Twin-right-armed, and thus spake he :

“ Dread Goddess and worship-worthy is this within mine hall,

Who saved me when anguish o’ertook me from that my measureless fall, 395

Through the spite of my shameless mother, who longed for my lameness’ sake

To hide me from sight. Ah, then had I suffered with sore heart-ache,

But Eurynomê raised me, and Thetis, in sheltering arms to enfold,

Eurynomê, daughter of Ocean, the stream ever backward rolled.

Nine years did I forge much curious work their beauty to deck, 400

Brooches, and arm-bands serpent-coiled, bowls, chains for the neck,

In their hollow cave ; and around me the River of Ocean aye

Murmured with foam in his infinite flow ; and none save they

Knew ; neither to Gods in Heaven nor mortal men was it known,

But Thetis was ware, and Eurynomê, they which had saved me, alone. 405

Even she to our mansion is come this day :—how shall I forbear

To render the price of my life unto Thetis of beautiful hair ?

But thou before this guest spread now of thy choicest cheer,

Till I set my bellows aside, and all my forging gear.”

He spake, and he rose from the anvil, a monster ungainly and grim, 410

Halting ; yet swiftly bestirred them the slender legs of him.

And the bellows aloof from the furnace he set, and the tools wherewith

He wrought, in a coffer of silver he laid them, the wizard smith.

And from brow and from hands with a sponge did he wipe the sweat of his toil,

And his neck and his shaggy breast he cleansed from the stithy’s soil ; 415

And his tunic he donned, and he grasped his massy sceptre, and hied  
Forth halting thence ; and handmaids upbore him on either side,  
Golden, like unto living damsels fair and young :  
Yea, in their hearts there is wit, and they fashion speech with the tongue ;  
They have strength, and the works of the deathless Gods can they skill to do.  
Upbearing their king they hasted, and nigh Hephaistus drew [420  
Unto Thetis, and sat him adown on a bright throne's glittering pride,  
And he clasped her hand in his own, and he uttered the word, and he cried :

“ Why, Thetis royally-robed, hast thou fared unto this our abode,  
O worship-worthy and dear ? 'Tis a way thou hast seldom trod. 425  
Utter thy thought, for my spirit doth bid me perform the same,  
If perform it I may, if the deed be a deed that hands can frame.”

Answered him Thetis, the while the tears of her sorrow fell :  
“ Is there ever a Goddess, Hephaistus, of all in Olympus that dwell,  
Which hath borne such manifold troubles and bitter within her breast 430  
As Zeus Kronion hath given to me above all the rest ?  
Me only of all the Queens of the Sea to a man did he wed,  
Unto Peleus, Aiakus' son, and I stooped to a mortal's bed  
Albeit exceeding loth. With pitiful eld bowed low  
In his halls he lieth outworn ; but for me is there yet more woe. 435  
A son did he give me to bear and to rear : he was peerless, I trow,  
Amid heroes, and like to a sapling his stature upward shot.  
And I nurtured him even as a plant in a fruitful garden-plot ;  
And in beaked galleys I sent him forth to the Ilian shore  
To fight with the Trojans ; but him shall I welcome back nevermore 440



In Peleus' palace-halls, when the home-return is won.

Yea, while he liveth before me, and seeth the light of the sun,

He hath anguish, and nothing availeth mine help, if I come to his aid.

The sons of Achaia chose for his guerdon a captive maid :

Yet she from his hands was torn by King Agamemnon again. 445

And with anguish for her was his spirit distraught : but the Trojan men

Pent in by the sterns of the ships the Achaians, and suffered them not

To break forth thence ; and the Argive elders his help besought,

And of glorious gifts they spake, exceeding many and brave.

Then he refused that day that his own right arm should save ; 450

Yet in his own war-gear he arrayed Patroclus his friend,

And battleward sped him ; a mighty host therewithal did he send.

And all through the livelong day they fought by the Skaian gate.

That day had they sacked the town, but when havoc exceeding great

Had been wrought of Menoitius' son, Apollo smote him down, 455

And slew him in forefront of fight, and on Hector bestowed the renown.

But now, if thou haply wilt hear, at thy knees beseeching I fall

That thou give to my swift-doomed child a shield and a helmet withal,

And beautiful greaves with the ankle-rings fitted deftly thereto,

And a corslet ; for lost was his own when slain was his comrade true 460

By the foe. On the earth is he lying with anguish stricken through."

Made answer the Twin-right-armed, the Lord of Craft-renown :

"Fear not, let trouble for this not bow thy spirit down.

O that from death dread-sounding my cunning could hide him away

In the hour when his terrible doom draweth nigh to lay hold on the prey. 465

As lightly as beautiful arms shall be his, which in days to be  
Full many a man shall behold with amaze, whosoever shall see."

So spake he, and left her there, and passed to his bellows again,  
And he turned them unto the fire, and he bade them toil amain.  
And they mid the melting-pots blew all with mouths a score ; 470  
All manner of breath, full deftly breathing, forth did they pour.  
With their furious blast now kept they pace with his eager speed,  
And anon in such wise as Hephaistus willed, and the work had need.  
And into the furnace he casteth the stubborn brass and the tin,  
And the precious gold and the silver : and now shall the forging begin ; 475  
For he layeth the anvil huge on the block, and his right hand sought  
The mighty forging-sledge, and the tongs in his left hath he caught.

And first he fashioned the shield most huge and massy of mould,  
With cunning work all o'er, and the bright rim's compassing fold  
With its glittering circles three, and the silver baldric-band. 480  
Of the buckler's self five folds there were, and therein was there wrought  
Full many a cunning device of the God-smith's wondrous thought.

Therein did he fashion the Earth, and the Heaven therein, and the Sea,  
And the tireless Sun, and the Moon in her full-orbed majesty ;  
And therein was the host of the Stars wherewithal the heaven is crowned, 485  
And the Pleiads and Hyads therein, and the might of Orion were found,  
And the Bear—men wont to call it moreover the Wain and the Team,—  
And it turneth at bay, ever watching Orion's falchion-gleam,  
And alone it hath no share in the baths of the Ocean-stream.

And therein two beautiful cities of earth-born men he made. 490

In the one were espousals, therein withal was the banquet arrayed. [their way  
And the brides from their bowers by the shining of torches they brought on  
Through the city, and rose the multitudinous marriage-lay.

And boys in the dance went whirling round, and the sweet loud cry  
Of the flutes and the harps went up from the midst, and wonderingly 495  
The women each from her porch looked forth as the train swept by.

And yonder the people in folkmote were gathered, and lo, there was strife :  
For there two men were contending concerning the price of the life  
Of a slain man : this set forth to the people his cause, and sware [500

"I have paid all : " that one denied, saying, "Naught have I had of the slayer."

And each by the witness's mouth would fain make proof of his cause.

And the multitude cheered on both, for divided their favour was.

And the heralds were stilling the people the while ; and hearkening

The elders sat on the polished stones in the hallowed ring.

And the wands of the clear-voiced heralds into their hands did they take, 505

As they sprang to their feet, and to these in turn for his right each spake.

And the blood-price lay in the midst, two talents of gold : and the same

Should be given to him that in pleading by righteousness overcame.

And around that other town two armies in leaguer lay,

Flashing in harness of war, but in council divided were they, 510

Or to sack it mid riot and wrack, or to part full orderly all

What treasure soever the fair town warded within her wall.

But her folk not yet would yield, but for ambush their arms did they don.

And their dear-loved wives kept watch on the rampart, ranged thereon,

Yea, and their little children and old men hoary-grey. 515

Forth marched they, and Arès and Pallas Athênê led on to the fray,  
Both fashioned of gold, and golden withal was the vesture they bare,  
And even as Gods in their harness stately they were and fair,  
And they towered o'er the throng, for lesser of stature the war-folk were.  
So when they were come to the place where the ambush seemed them good, 520  
In the bed of the river, wherein all cattle drank of the flood,  
There crouched they, sheathed in the brass flame-flashing, to wait for the prey.  
And for these two scouts of the war-host sat down far away,  
And keenly for sight of the sheep and the wreath-horned kine watched they.  
And these full speedily came: two shepherds behind them the while 525  
Went merrily playing the pipe, and they had no thought of the guile.  
Then spied them the liers in wait, and they rushed, and with swift sword-sweep  
Slew they to right and to left the kine, and the goodly sheep  
Of the fair flock silver-white, and they slaughtered the shepherds withal.  
But now did the noise of the tumult amidst of the cattle fall 530  
On the ears of the foe, as in council they sat, and in haste they bestrode  
Their battle-steeds high-prancing, and fast to the rescue they rode.  
And there by the banks of the river they set in array the fight,  
And against each other they sped the brazen lances' flight.  
And with these men mingling Strife and Confusion and fell Death met, 535  
One man fresh-wounded and living she grasped, one woundless yet.  
Through the midst of the fray by the feet was she haling a third wretch dead.  
And a garment she bare on her shoulders with men's blood crimson-red.  
And as living men those images charged, and they fought amain,  
And foeman was dragging away the corpse of foeman slain, 540



And therein did he fashion a thrice-eared field, fat glebe and fair,  
Smooth-levelled and broad, and ploughers therein full many there were  
Driving the yokes of oxen, and to and fro they wheeled.

And whenso they won at the turning the boundary-dyke of the field,  
Lo, there was waiting a man, and a cup to their hands he gave 545  
Of honey-sweet wine: then turned they, and fast through the furrows they clave,  
Full eager again at the boundary-dyke of the field to stand.

And darkened the mould behind them: yea, it was like ploughed land,  
Albeit of gold; and herein was the marvel wrought by his hand.

And he set in the shield a demesne deep-loamed, and the hinds therein 550  
Were reaping, and each man held in his hand a sickle keen.

And here by the furrows the handfuls were falling in rows to the ground,  
And others the binders of sheaves with the twisted straw-bands bound;  
Sheaf-binders three on the reapers waited: behind them still  
Did boys, as they gathered the handfuls up, their bosoms fill, 555

And unceasingly bear to the binders: in silence amidst of them stood  
By a furrow their lord with his staff in his hand, full blithe of mood.  
And under the shade of an oak-tree the henchmen a feast for them spread,  
For a mighty ox had they slain, and the dressing merrily sped;  
And much white barley the handmaids mixed for the reapers' bread. 560

And a great wide vineyard with clusters teeming he fashioned there,  
Beautiful, all of gold; yet black the grapes of it were.

And propped upon silver poles were the vines in ordered rows.

And on either hand was a cyanus-trench: and the vineyard-close

With a fence of tin was encompassed; and one path led to the same 565

Whereby, when they gathered the fruit of the vine, the vintagers came.  
There maidens and striplings were gathered, and mirthful-innocent  
In plaited baskets bearing the honied fruit they went.

And a boy on a harp high-ringing was playing amidst of the throng  
Sweet music, and sang thereto the beautiful Linus-song 570  
With silvery voice, and his fellows, all as they toiled, to the chime  
Of the strings of the harp and the chant with bounding feet kept time.

And a herd of tall-horned kine that craftsman wrought thereon,  
And fashioned of gold and of tin those stately oxen shone.  
And with lowing forth from the byre to the pasture-lea did they speed 575  
Beside the murmuring river, beside the waving reed.

And shepherds golden-moulded were pacing beside the kine,  
Four men, and behind their masters were following fleet hounds nine.  
But lo, two terrible lions in front of the herd laid hold  
On a bull loud-roaring : his bellowings' thunder-echoes rolled 580  
Afar, as they dragged him ; and hounds and men to the rescue went.

But the hide of the stately beast by this had the lions rent, [fain  
And were gorging the inwards and dark-hued blood : but the herdmen were  
On the spoilers to speed the fleetfoot hounds with chiding vain.

For they shrank from gripping the lion with desperate-daring fang, 585  
But they stood full nigh, and they bayed, and anon aside they sprang.

And the glorious Twin-right-armed there wrought in a lovely glen  
A pasture thronged with the white-fleeced sheep : roofed huts of men  
Were there, and the cattle-steadings, and many a folding pen.

And the glorious Twin-right-armed there fashioned a dancing floor : 590

It was like unto that which in Knossus the wide on the Cretan shore  
 For beautiful-haired Ariadnê Daidalus fashioned of yore.  
 There youths and maidens of costly bride-price in dance arrayed  
 Their fingers each on the other's wrist all lightly laid.  
 And clothed were the maidens in vesture of linen white and clean, 595  
 And the boys in tunics woven fair with an oil-gleam sheen.  
 And a beautiful wreath each damsel bare, each stripling a brand  
 In a golden sheath that hung by a silver baldric-band.  
 And now with feet all cunningly gliding around whirled they  
 Full lightly, as when some potter sitteth and maketh assay 600  
 Of the wheel to his hands well-fitted, to know if it runneth true.  
 And in ranks swift-speeding anon to meet each other they flew.  
 And around that lovely dance a great throng stood in a ring  
 Drinking delight : in their midst did a godlike minstrel sing  
 Harping ; and tumblers twain were whirling in time to the sound, 605  
 For still as uprose the strain did the lithe limbs lightly bound.  
 And therein did he set the mighty strength of the Ocean-stream,  
 Round the uttermost rim of the curious-carven shield did it gleam.  
 So when he had fashioned the buckler's strong-wrought massy frame,  
 He made him a corslet then more bright than the shining of flame. 610  
 And he fashioned a helmet strong that should lap his temples close,  
 Fair, curious-wrought, and above it a crest all-golden rose.  
 And he made for him greaves of the tin that lightly doth clasp and bend.  
 So the glorious Twin-right-armed wrought all, and the work had end.  
 And he raised them, and unto Achilles' mother the arms did he bring. 615

Then darted she down from Olympus' snows, as a hawk on the wing,  
Bearing the gift of Hephaistus, the arms fair-glittering.



## BOOK XIX.

*Achilles the godlike renounceth his wrath, and upriseth to battle.*

**N**OW Dawn the saffron-mantled up from the Ocean-streams  
Arose, to Immortals and mortals to bring the new day's beams ;  
And, bearing the gift of the God, to the galleys had Thetis won.  
There lying and clasping Patroclus she found her belovèd son ;  
And his wail rang wild and high ; and his comrades, a warrior band,      5  
Mourned round : but now did the Goddess divine in the midst of them stand,  
And she spake and she uttered the word, as her fingers enfolded his hand :

“ My child, this man will we leave, for all our heart-sick pain,  
To lie here, seeing that he by the will of the Gods hath been slain.  
But thou, the gift of Hephaistus, the glorious arms, take thou,      10  
Most fair, whose like no man on his shoulders hath borne ere now.”

So spake the Goddess, and cast with the word that battle-gear  
At Achilles' feet, and the rich-wrought work rang loud and clear.  
On the Myrmidons trembling came ; none dared for very awe  
Thither to turn his face, for they quailed. But Achilles saw,      15

And still as he gazed the battle-wrath filled him the more, and his eyes  
From beneath his brows as the lightning gleamed in terrible wise.  
And he joyed to hold in his hands the God's gift glorious-fair  
Till his spirit was filled with delight of beholding the marvels there.  
Then straightway he spake to his mother, and sped the winged word-flight: 20

“ My mother, the god-given armour is such as is meet and right  
That the work of the Deathless should be : no mortal the labour had sped.  
But now will I don mine harness of fight : yet sorely I dread  
Lest into Menoitius' stalwart scion the while there should pass  
Flies, entering into the wounds that were stricken deep with the brass, 25  
And should breed their worms, and his corpse be entreated shamefully,—  
For his life hath been slain out of him,—and his flesh be corrupted thereby.”

Unto him did Thetis the Goddess, the silver-footed, reply :  
“ My child, let trouble for this on thy spirit in no wise lie.  
Lo, I for his sake will essay to drive those fierce tribes far, 30  
The flies, which be wont to devour the warriors slain in war.  
For though he should still lie here for a whole year's space, evermore  
Untainted his flesh shall abide, yea, sounder than heretofore.  
But thou to the council summon Achaia's lords of fight, [35  
And thy wrath against king Agamemnon their captain renounce in their sight,  
Thereafter full swiftly array thee for battle, and clothe thee with might.”

So spake she, and thrilled him with prowess and valour above all dread ;  
But ambrosia into Patroclus and nectar rosy-red  
She poured through his nostrils, to keep untainted the flesh of the dead.

But forth by the shore of the sea Achilles the godlike hied 40

With a terrible shout, and the heroes Achaian upsprang as he cried.  
And they mid the gathered galleys that wont theretofore to abide,  
And they that were helmsmen, and steered the ships o'er the salt sea-flood,  
And they which were stewards beside the galleys, dispensers of food,  
Even these came unto the folkmote now, for Achilles at last 45  
Had appeared : he had lingered from stern fight long in the days overpast.  
And the War-god's henchmen twain came halting thitherward,  
Tydeides the battle-bider, Odysseus the godlike lord ;  
And they leaned on their spears, for their grievous hurts were upon them yet,  
And they sat them down where foremost the folk in assembly were set. 50  
And last of them all Agamemnon the King of Men drew near,  
With his wound on him yet, the stab of the brazen-pointed spear,  
When Koön the son of Antenor in stern fight dealt the stroke.  
So when all the Achaians were met, and thronged were the gathered folk,  
Arose fleet-footed Achilles amidst of them all, and he spoke : 55  
“ Atreides, better by far had this thing been for twain,  
Even for thee and for me, when, stricken at heart with pain,  
We raged for the sake of a girl in soul-devouring strife,—  
O would that Artemis' shaft mid the galleys had reft her life  
In the day when I won her, when down to destruction Lyrnessus I thrust ! 60  
Then not so many Achaians had gnashed their teeth in the dust  
Under the hands of their foes, when the fire of my wrath was aglow.  
For the Trojans and Hector better it was : but Achaia, I trow,  
Long time shall remember our feud, the contention of thee and me.  
But now will we suffer the past to be past, though a sorrow it be, 65

Down-crushing the spirit our breasts within 'neath necessity's feet.  
Yea, now will I still mine anger : I count it nowise meet  
To be wroth evermore without surcease : but with all speed now  
The long-haired sons of Achaia to battle enkindle thou,  
To the end I may meet yon Trojans again, and make trial, and know 70  
Whether haply they long by the galleys to sleep. There be some, I trow,  
Full gladly for resting shall bend their knees, what fleer soe'er  
Shall escape from devouring war, shall outrun my chasing spear."

He spake, and rejoiced the Achaians, the goodly-greaved array,  
That Peleides the mighty-hearted renounced his wrath that day. 75

Then in their hearing the King of Men Agamemnon spoke,  
Even there from his seat, for he rose not up in the midst of the folk :

"O friends and Danaan heroes, the War-god's henchman throng,  
Meet is it to hear who upriseth : beseems not with clamourous tongue  
To break in : even the wise were hardly bestead, I doubt. 80

Yea, how should any man hear in the midst of babble and shout,  
Or speak ?—for that even the voice clear-ringing were drowned mid the rout.

Unto Peleus' son will I now declare my counsel ; but ye  
Argives, give heed, and ponder the word that proceedeth from me.  
Full oft the Achaians spake unto me for the selfsame cause, 85

Yea, and reproached me for this : yet not blame-worthy I was ;  
But herein Zeus, Fate, and Erinnyes that walketh in gloom had part,  
Who amidst the assembly with furious blindness smote mine heart,  
In the day when I took from Achilles myself his honour-meed :  
But what could I do ?—'tis a God accomplisheth each such deed. 90



Eldest of Zeus's daughters is Atê, who blindeth all,  
 The fell one : soft are her feet, for not on the earth do they fall ;  
 But she setteth her silent steps on the very heads of men  
 To their hurting : and many an one was fettered of her ere then ;  
 Yea, Zeus she blinded of yore, albeit they name him the best 95  
 Of the children of earth and of heaven ; yet even the mightiest  
 Was by crafty wiles of Hêrê, a God by a Goddess, beguiled,  
 In the day when Alkmênê's time was fulfilled to bear a child,  
 Even Hêrakles' might, in the city of Thêbê the beautiful-crowned.

Yea, then unto all the Gods Zeus spake that boast renowned : 100

‘ Give ear, ye Gods, unto me, ye Goddesses, hearken my speech, [teach.  
 That the thing which my heart in my breast hath commanded my lips may  
 This day shall Eileithuia, the Queen of Travail, bring  
 A man to the light, who o'er all the dwellers around shall be king,  
 Even them whose blood is mine, and of Zeus their high descent.’ 105

Then unto him spake Hêrê the Queen with subtle intent :  
 ‘ Thou wilt yet play false, neither bring to fulfilment this thy word !  
 Now swear unto me a mighty oath, Olympian Lord,  
 That o'er all the dwellers around that child shall indeed bear sway  
 Which between the feet of a travailing woman shall fall this day, 110  
 A child of the race of the men which by lineage come of thy blood.’

She spake, but her crafty guile Zeus nowise understood ;  
 But he swore that mighty oath : then blinded sore was his heart.  
 Swift from the peak of Olympus adown did Hêrê dart ;  
 And with speed to Achaian Argos she came, wherein she had known 115

Was abiding the stately wife of Sthenelus, Perseus' son ;  
And the woman was great with child, but there lacked of her nine months two ;  
Yet she brought him forth to the light before the season due.

But she stayed Alkmênè from bearing : the Travail-queens from her need  
She withheld ; and herself with the tidings hasted to Kronos' seed : 120

‘ Zeus, Lightning-father, a word have I brought for thy pondering.

This day is a hero born o’er the Argive folk to be king,  
The offspring of Sthenelus child of Perseus, Eurystheus hight.  
Of thy lineage he is : that he govern the Argives is meet and right.’

So spake she, and deep through his soul did the piercing anguish smite. 125

Forthright he laid hold upon Atê’s head of the shining hair,

Wroth in the spirit of him, and a mighty oath he sware,

That ne’er to Olympus again and the star-bestudded heaven

Should Atê return, by whom all men into madness are driven.

So spake he, and hurled her from heaven, the star-paved home of the Gods, 130

Whirling her round ; and swift she descended to menfolk’s abodes.

Yet he groaned for her deed evermore when he saw his beloved child

As in labour unseemly and sore at the hest of Eurystheus he toiled.

So also I, when Hector the mighty of stormy plume

By the sterns of the galleys was hurling the Argive men to their doom, 135

Could never forget that blindness which erst had led me astray.

But since I was blinded, and Zeus had stolen my wit away,

Fain am I to make amends, and a countless requital to pay.

But thou to the battle arouse thee, and kindle the folk to the fray.

Here am I to render thee all, even whatso gifts yestreen 140

Odysseus the godlike promised to thee thy tents within.  
 Yet tarry a space, if thou wilt, how eager for battle soe'er,  
 And the gifts mine henchmen shall take from beside my galley, and bear.  
 And so, if my givings content thee, shalt thou be certified."

Then unto him made answer Achilles the fleetfoot, and cried : 145  
 " Agamemnon, King of Men, far-famous Atreus' son,  
 The gifts give thou, if thou wilt, as seemeth thee best to be done,  
 Or withhold them : it lieth with thee. But now let us think of the fight  
 With speed : for to chaffer here it is nowise meet and right,  
 Neither to tarry ; for yet unwrought is a deed of might, 150  
 That again mid the forefighters men may behold Achilles go  
 With his spear brass-headed laying the Trojan war-ranks low.  
 Bethink you of this, all ye, as ye fight each man with his foe."

But Odysseus the full of devices uprose, and his counsel he gave :  
 " Now nay, O Achilles the godlike, not thus, be thou never so brave, 155  
 The sons of Achaia fasting Ilium-ward speed thou  
 With the Trojans to fight ; for not for a little space, I trow,  
 Shall the strife continue, when mingled once the battalions are  
 In the battle, if God shall breathe into both the fury of war.  
 Nay, bid the Achaians to taste by the sea-swift galleys of food 160  
 And of wine, for herein is their strength and their battle-hardihood.  
 For to fight through the livelong day till the sun from the heavens fail,  
 All unsustained of food, may no man's strength avail :  
 For how eager soever for battle the soul of him be at the first,  
 Nathless his limbs unawares wax heavy, and hunger and thirst 165

Beset him ; his knees are hindered what time he essayeth to go.  
But whoso hath taken his fill of the wine and the meat, and so  
Setteth himself to war through the livelong day with the foe,  
Ever stout is the heart in his breast, and his limbs unwearying strain,  
Neither faint, until all the host at the last from the battle refrain. 170  
Go to now, suffer the host to disperse, and bid them prepare  
Their meat, and the gifts let the King of Men Agamemnon bear  
To the midst of the folkmote-stead that all the Achaians may see  
With their eyes, and thou in thy spirit gladdened thereby shalt be.  
And, uprising amidst of the Argives, an oath unto thee let him swear 175  
That he never ascended her couch, nor in love embraced her there,  
As the wont is of man, O King, that coucheth by woman's side ;  
And so shall the spirit within thy breast be pacified.  
And thereafter to do thee a pleasure be goodly banquet arrayed  
In his tent, to the end that naught of thy due may be left unpaid. 180  
And hereafter, Atreides, to others withal shall thy dealings be made  
More just, forasmuch as, I ween, a king is in no wise shamed  
When he maketh amends to a man, if first into anger he flamed."  
Then spake unto him in turn Agamemnon the nations' lord :  
"Glad am I, Laertes' son, who hearken to this thy word : 185  
For meetly all hast thou uttered, and said it in season due.  
This oath I consent to take, and my spirit doth move me thereto,  
Neither falsely in presence of God will I swear. Yet a little to stay  
Here let Achilles incline, howsoever he yearn for the fray :  
And all ye others abide in assembly, until in your sight 190



The gifts from my tent shall come, and we seal the sure oath-plight.  
 And to thee thyself mine instruction is this, and this my command,  
 That thou choose to thee noble Achaian youths, a princely band,  
 Who shall bear from my galley the gifts, even all that yestreen the King  
 To Achilles pledged him to give, and the women withal shall ye bring. 195  
 And let Talthybius speed, and a boar let the herald provide,  
 That to Zeus and the Sun we may sacrifice mid the war-host wide."

But Achilles the fleet of foot made answer and spake to him then :  
 "Atreides the high-renowned, Agamemnon King of Men,  
 Of a surety another season for these your doings were best, 200  
 Whensoever there cometh from stress of the battle respite and rest,  
 And my fury shall burn no longer so fiercely within my breast.  
 But pierced are they lying and mangled now, those friends stricken down  
 By Hector the son of Priam, when Zeus vouchsafed him renown :  
 And behold, ye are bidding us hence to the feast !—now verily nay. 205  
 For me, I would bid the sons of Achaia to naught but the fray,  
 Ay, fasting and hungry : and then, at the going down of the sun,  
 Be goodly supper arrayed, when revenge for the shame hath been won.  
 Ere then down this my throat shall there pass not in any wise bread,  
 Neither in any wise drink, while lieth my comrade dead, 210  
 Lieth within my tent, by the keen brass stabbed and torn,  
 With his feet to the door thereof, and ever around him mourn  
 My companions : wherefore in these things pleasure my soul hath none,  
 But in slaughter and blood of men, and the hard-heaved dying groan."

But Odysseus spake unto him, and the manifold-counselled replied : 215

“ O Peleus’ scion Achilles, Achaia’s crown of pride,  
Thou art stronger than I, not a little thy might overpasseth mine  
With the spear, yet haply Odysseus’ wisdom excelleth thine.  
I am elder-born, and more do I know that the years can teach :  
Then let thine heart for a little incline to hearken my speech. 220  
Full soon is the hunger of men for the battle satisfied :  
And when heaviest falleth the swath of the keen brass sweeping wide,  
Full short is the reaping-time, when bowed are the scales of doom  
By Zeus, of whose hand war’s dispensation to man doth come.  
But with fasting it may not be that Achaians their dead should mourn : 225  
For day after day full many in heaps upon heaps are borne  
Earthward—when should we win any respite from trouble at all ?  
Nay, rather behoveth it even to bury him, whoso shall fall,  
Casting out ruth from our hearts, and weeping the dead but a day.  
But whoso be left alive from the hateful war, even they 230  
Must needs bethink them of meat and of drink, that more than before  
We may battle against the foe unflinching evermore  
With our flesh clothed on with the stubborn brass, and let no man abide  
To tarry and wait for any battle-summons beside,  
For an evil thing this summons shall be unto whoso shall stay 235  
By the ships of the Argives ; but, charging forth in serried array,  
With the horse-quelling warriors of Troy will we waken the eager fray.”  
He spake, and the sons of renownèd Nestor he took, and with these  
Took he Meges the son of Phyleus, and Thoas and Mêriones :  
And with Melanippus he called Lykomêdes Kreon’s son, 240

And these to the tent of Atreus' son Agamemnon are gone.  
 In the selfsame hour was the word and the deed's accomplishing.  
 Seven tripods they bare from the tent, the promised gift of the King,  
 And flame-bright caldrons a score : twelve horses forth did they lead :  
 And the women in loomwork wise did they bring from the tent with speed, 245  
 Seven, and the eighth was the lovely-checked Briseïs the maid.  
 Thereafter the gold, ten talents in all, Odysseus weighed ;  
 And he led, and behind him the princes Achaian the rich gifts bare.  
 And they set them amidst the assembly ; and rose Agamemnon there.  
 Then stood by the shepherd of folk Talthybius, mighty of voice 250  
 As a God, with his hands on the head of the boar of sacrifice.  
 And the son of Atreus drew his dagger forth with his hand,  
 Which hung evermore by the sheath of his mighty battle-brand,  
 And he severed the hairs, unto Zeus uplifting his hands on high ;  
 And he prayed, and in silence the while the Argives all sat by, 255  
 As was meet, giving ear to the King, to his solemn sacrifice-cry.  
 And he uttered his voice, and he prayed, looking up to the broad-arched sky :  
 " Be witness now Zeus first, most highest and best of the Gods,  
 And Earth, and the Sun, and Erinnyes that hear from the nether abodes  
 Men that have falsely sworn, and avenge the oath betrayed, 260  
 That never I laid mine hands upon Briseïs the maid,  
 Neither with purpose of love's embrace, nor for aught beside :  
 But ever within my tents unsullied did she abide.  
 And if aught of mine oath is false, may the Gods give me pain upon pain,  
 Even all that they render to him that taketh their name in vain." 265

¶ He spake, and with pitiless brass through the neck of the beast he shore.  
And the body Talthymbius hurled amid gulfs of the sea-surf hoar,  
Whirling it round, for the fish to devour : but Achilles then  
Arose, and spake mid the battle-revelling Argive men :

“ Zeus Father, with blindness exceeding great thou visitest 270  
Men’s spirits ! For never had Atreus’ son uproused in my breast  
The anger that thrilled it deep, nor with stubborn will had he ta’en  
That maid in mine own despite ; but Zeus, I ween, was fain  
That death should befall full many a man of Achaia’s array.  
Now get ye unto your meat, to the end we may clash in the fray.” 275

So did he speak, and dispersed the gathered host straightway.  
So scattered the folk, and each to his several ship fared they.  
And the gifts were taken in charge of the Myrmidons mighty-hearted,  
And bearing the same unto godlike Achilles’ ship they departed.  
In the tents they laid them, a place therein to the women they gave ; 280  
And the horses into the herd the lordly henchmen drave.  
And Briseïs thereafter, like unto Aphroditê the Golden,  
So soon as Patroclus, stabbed with the brass, of her eyes was beholden,  
Fell on him, and clasped with a wild-ringing cry : with her hands she tare  
Her bosom and tender neck, and her face exceeding fair. 285  
And the woman goddess-like spake weeping bitterly :

“ Patroclus, dearest of all to the hapless heart of me,  
Alive did I leave thee here, when forth of the tent I was led,  
But now, O chieftain of men, I return but to find thee dead !  
Ay, so evermore from evil to evil still am I driven. 290



My husband, to whom of my sire and my mother the Queen I was given,  
 In front of my city pierced with the keen-whetted brass did I see ;  
 And those whom the selfsame mother had borne, my brethren three—  
 Ah near and dear, yet the day of destruction must all they meet !  
 But yet, oh yet, thou didst suffer me not, when Achilles the fleet 295  
 Smote godlike Mynes' town, and my lord by his hand had died,  
 To weep, but thou saidst thou wouldst make me godlike Achilles' bride,  
 His true-wedded wife, and wouldst bear me in ships far over the tide  
 To a marriage-feast mid the Myrmidon folk on the Phthian shore.  
 O bitterly therefore I weep for thee dead, who wert kind evermore." 300

So spake she, weeping the while, and the women echoed her moan,  
 For Patroclus in outward seeming, but each for woes of her own.  
 But the elders Achaian came round the hero on every side,  
 And besought him to take some meat, but these with a groan he denied :

"I beseech you, if any friend of his love will but heed my cry, 305  
 That ye cease to require that with meat and with drink I should satisfy  
 Mine heart, for that terrible grief hath beset me for this my friend :  
 But still, till the sun goeth down, will I stay and endure to the end."

He spake ; at his word the princes departed otherwhere :  
 But Atreus' sons and Odysseus the godlike tarried there ; 310  
 And with Nestor Idomeneus tarried, and Phoinix the car-lord old,  
 Being fain to console him with grief deep-stricken : but nowise consoled  
 Would his heart be, or ever he plunged mid the jaws of bloody war.  
 And calling to mind his beloved he spake, and he sighed full sore :

"Ah verily once, O dearest companion, O hapless dead, 315

Thyself for me in the tent a dainty feast didst spread  
With despatchful haste, when the men of Achaia were hastening  
Against the horse-quelling Trojans the tear-fraught battle to bring.  
But mangled now art thou lying, and oh, the heart of me  
Will none of the meat and the drink within my pavilion that be, 320  
Through yearning for thee: no sorer affliction than this can betide;  
Nay, not though the tidings should come unto me that my father had died,—  
Who in Phthia-land now, I ween, is shedding the comfortless tear,  
For a son sore longing; but he in the land of the alien here  
For Helen's sake, the abhorred, with the Trojans still must war,— 325  
Yea, or that dead was my son, who is fostered in Skyros afar,  
If perchance Neoptolemus yet is alive, the godlike child.  
Ah once the star of a hope through my spirit's darkness smiled,  
That alone I should perish from Argos afar, the war-steed land,  
In Troyland here, but that thou shouldst return to the Phthian strand, 330  
And that thou in the dark swift galley that my child shouldst bring  
Homeward from Skyros' isle, and shouldst show to him everything,  
Show him my substance and thralls, and my palace's stately height:—  
For Peleus my father by this, I ween, shall be dead outright;  
Or haply in feeble life and in sorrow he lingereth on, 335  
And in hateful eld, and ever he waiteth to hear of his son,  
Till the woeful tidings come, and he know that my days are done."

So weeping he spake, and the elders answered him groan for groan:  
Dear ones had they left in their halls, and each remembered his own.  
And the Kronos-begotten beholding them weeping was pity-stirred, 340

And straightway he cried to Athênê, and spake the swift-winged word :

“ My child, of a truth yon hero wholly forsakest thou !

What, hath Achilles no more any part in the love of thee now ?

Sooth, he in any wise sitteth in front of the ships tall-prowed

Aye wailing his dear-loved friend ; but all that warrior-crowd 345

Are gone to their meat, but fasting he is, and all unfed.

Thou then go thither, and nectar into his bosom shed

And ambrosia sweet, that he be not of hunger sore bestead.”

Enkindled the more by his word was Athênê the eager-hearted :

Away, like a wide-winged falcon of scream keen-thrilling she darted, 350

And from heaven through the welkin she hurled her. And now the Achaian

Swiftly were arming throughout the host. But the Goddess then [men

Through the breast of Achilles the nectar and sweet ambrosia shed, [sped.

Lest the faintness of hunger should come on his knees, through the war as they

And herself to her mighty father's palace stately-soaring 355

Was gone : but forth of the sea-swift ships that host went pouring.

And as when thick-thronging the flakes of the snow from Zeus flutter forth

Chill-driven before the welkin-begotten blast of the north,

So then thick-thronging the helmets flashing their glorious sheen

Went streaming forth from the ships, and the bossy shields between, 360

And the corslets massy-plated, and spear by ashen spear ;

And the splendour went up to the sky, and the earth laughed far and near

With the lightning of brass, and the thunder pealed from the myriad tramp

Of men : and Achilles the godlike armed him amidst of the camp.

Then was a gnashing heard of his teeth, from his eyes 'gan dart 365

Flames like the blazing of fire, and there entered into his heart  
Unendurable anguish of wrath, and his fury for fight rose higher  
In the gifts of the God as he clad him, the work of the Lord of Fire.  
First unto his legs did he lay the greaves fair-glittering,  
Beautiful, clasped around with the silver ankle-ring. 370  
Thereafter the sheathing corslet about his breast he laid,  
And he slung from his shoulders his silver-studded battle-blade,  
All-brazen ; thereafter he took his buckler stark and vast,  
Whose glorious shining afar like the light of the moon was cast.  
And as when there appeareth to seafarers over the sea the light 375  
Of a blazing fire, and burneth its flame on a mountain-height  
In a lonely stading,—but them as they gaze do the wild winds sweep  
Afar from the friends that they love o'er the face of the fish-fraught deep ;—  
So from the shield of Achilles the sheen went up to the sky,  
From the beautiful rich-wrought targe. And he lifted the strong helm high, 380  
And he set it upon his brow : as a star that morion gleamed  
Horse-hair plumed, and golden threads all round it streamed  
Wherewith of Hephaistus' hand full thickly the crest was bedight.  
Then godlike Achilles made proof of himself in his harness of fight,  
To wot if they fitted, if ran untrammelled each glorious limb ; 385  
And the shepherd of folk they uplifted, as wings they became unto him.  
And the lance of his sire from the spear-stand took that mightier son,  
The stark spear massy and huge : mid Achaia's host there was none  
Might swing it, but strength for the wielding thereof had Achilles alone,  
The shaft that Cheiron had brought to his father, the ashen beam 390



From the crest of Pelion hewn, o'er the slaughter of heroes to gleam.  
 And Automedon holpen of Alkimus hasted the steeds to array,  
 And they yoked them : the beautiful bands they buckled, the bits thrust they  
 Into the mouths of the horses ; the reins to the car strong-wrought  
 Backward they drew ; and the glittering scourge hath Automedon caught 395  
 In the hands that knew it well : to the chariot-floor hath he leapt ;  
 And arrayed in his battle-gear behind him Achilles stopt,  
 While bright as the Sun-god flashed his armour on every side.  
 Therewithal to the steeds of his father with terrible voice he cried :

“ Xanthus and Balius, far-famed brood of Podargé's strain, 400  
 Take heed that in other sort to the Danaan host again  
 Ye bring your chariot-lord, when ourselves from the battle refrain,  
 And not, as ye left Patroclus, leave us yonder slain.”

From beneath the yoke unto him the fleetfoot car-steed spoke,  
 Xanthus, drooping his head straightway, and beside the yoke 405  
 Streamed all his mane from the collar till low in the dust it lay.  
 And Hêrê the white-armed Goddess gave him a voice that day :

“ Yea, mighty Achilles, safe this day will we bear back thee :  
 Yet nigh is the day of thy doom. Not guilty thereof be we,  
 But a mighty God and the overmastering Doom shall be cause. 410  
 For not by our slowness of foot neither slackness of will it was  
 That the Trojans availed from Patroclus' shoulders thine armour to tear ;  
 Nay, but a God most mighty, whom fair-tressed Lêto bare,  
 Slew him in forefront of fight, giving Hector the glory-meed.  
 But for us, we twain as the blast of the West-wind fleetly could speed, 415

Which they name for the lightest-winged of the winds : but for thee withal,  
Even thee, is it doomed that by might of a God and a man thou shalt fall."

So spake he : then the Erinnyes hushed his voice for aye.

But to him did fleetfoot Achilles sorely disquieted say :

"Xanthus, why bodest thou death unto me?—thou needest not so. 420

Myself well know my weird, in death to be here laid low,

Far off from my dear-loved sire, from the mother that bare me afar.

Yet cease will I not till I give to the Trojans surfeit of war."

He spake, and with shouts sped onward the thunderfoot steeds of his car.

## BOOK XX.

*Of the strife of the Gods, and the battle backward rolled by Achilles.*

**S**O there by the beakèd galleys in harness of battle were dight  
The Achaians around thee, Peleus' son, insatiate of fight ;  
And the Trojans overagainst them were ranged on the plain's mid height.  
And Zeus bade Themis summon the Gods to the council-stead  
On the crest of ribbed Olympus ; and everywhither she sped 5  
Bidding them hie them up unto Zeus's palace-hall.  
There was never a River, save Ocean alone, but heeded the call ;  
There was none of the Nymphs, the haunters of copses lovely and lone,  
And of fountains of rivers, and water-meadows grass-overgrown.  
So up to the palace of Zeus the Herder of Clouds are they gone. 10  
And they sat them down where stretched colonnade upon bright colonnade  
Which Hephaistus with cunning heart for Zeus Allfather had made.  
So thronged they the mansion of Zeus : and the Earthshaker, Lord of the Seas,  
Disobeyed not the Goddess, but came from his halls of brine unto these ;  
And he sat in the midst, and he asked of the purpose of Zeus, and he said : 15

"Why, Lightning-lord, hast thou summoned the Gods to the council-stead?  
Concerning Achaians and Trojans in any wise ponderest thou?  
For exceeding nigh is the flame of their war and their battle now."

And Zeus the Cloudrack-gatherer answer to him addressed:

"Thou knowest, O Shaker of Earth, what purpose is in my breast, 20  
For whose sake I have summoned you: even in death are they dear in my sight.  
Yet verily I will abide on a fold of Olympus' height  
Sitting: therefrom will I gaze, and my soul will I gladden; but ye  
Go forth till ye reach the Achaians and Troy's war-company,  
And to these and to those give help, as to each of you seemeth right. 25  
For if now Achilles alone against yon Trojans shall fight,  
To stay Peleides the swift shall they never so little avail:  
Yea, when they saw him aforetime, ever they wont to quail:  
But now, when his wrath for his friend is exceeding grim and great,  
I fear lest he storm the wall, yea, even o'erleaping his fate." 30

So spake he, the Son of Kronos, and truceless strife was born;  
And the Gods went forth to the war, and heart from heart was torn.  
To the host of the galleys Hêrê and Pallas Athênê pressed,  
And Poseidon the Girder of Earth, and the Helper of men distressed,  
Hermes, of piercing wit, of the subtlety far-renowned; 35  
And with these Hephaistus exulting in pride of his strength was found,  
Halting, yet swiftly beneath him moved each slender limb.  
To the Trojans went Arês the stormy-crested, and ranged with him  
Artemis arrow-triumphant, and Phoebus the unshorn-haired,  
And Xanthus, and Lêto, and Laughter-queen Aphroditê fared. 40



While yet from the children of men the high Gods tarried afar,  
Triumphed Achaia's sons, for Achilles at last unto war  
Had appeared, though long had he lingered aloof from the bitter fray :  
But the knees of every Trojan were bowed with sore dismay ;  
For they looked on the son of Peleus with hearts that failed them for fear, 45  
As he flamed in his harness of battle, Destroyer Arês' peer.  
But when the Olympian Gods came down mid the warrior-rout,  
Rose Strife the enkindler of hosts, and Athênê uttered her shout,  
Standing now by the deep-delved trench without the wall,  
And anon far over the hoarse-resounding beach did she call. 50  
And Arês against her, black as the night of the tempest, cried,  
Now yelling from topmost Troy to the Trojans far and wide,  
Now rushing o'er Kallikolônê by swirling Simoïs' side.

So did the blessed Immortals uprousing these and those  
Join battle, and so into dread strife burst the Gods made foes. 55  
And the Father of Gods and Men with soul-appalling sound  
Thundered on high, and beneath Poseidon shook the ground,  
Even the boundless earth, and the soaring crests of the hills.  
Shook all the spurs of Ida, the ridge of the thousand rills,  
And her peaks, and the Trojans' town, and Achaia's ships wave-swayed. 60  
And Hades quaked from beneath, the King of the nethermost shade ;  
And he sprang from his throne, and he cried aloud in the dread of his heart  
Lest o'er him Earth-shaker Poseidon should cleave the ground apart,  
And revealed to Immortals and mortals should stand those awful abodes,  
Those mansions ghastly and grim, abhorred of the very Gods. 65

So great was the thunder-crash as the Gods in battle met.  
And face to face against Poseidon the King was set  
Phoebus Apollo, straining his feathered arrows keen ;  
And against Enyalios Pallas Athênê, the grey-eyed Queen ;  
Against Hêrê the Maid of the Golden Shaft, of the shout ringing far, 70  
Far-smiter's sister the Arrow-triumphant, uprose unto war ;  
And Hermes the mighty Helper ranged against Lêto stood ;  
And against Hephaistus the River, the great deep-swirling flood  
Of the Gods named Xanthus, Skamander of them of earth-born blood.

So Gods against Gods went forth to the war : but Achilles aye 75  
Yearned chiefly to meet the son of Priam amidst of the fray,  
Hector ; for fiercely his heart bade glut with the life-blood of him  
Arês the stubborn-shielded, the warrior murder-grim.  
But Apollo the battle-kindler spurred Aeneas to fight  
With Peleus' son, and straightway filled him with valorous might : 80  
And the voice of Lykaon, the child of Priam the King, did he take ;  
In the likeness of him Apollo the Zeus-begotten spake :

"O Trojan counsellor-chief, where now those threats of thine,  
And thy pledge to the princes of Troy, when ye tarried long at the wine,  
That facing Achilles Peleus' son thou wouldst stand in the fray ?" 85

Then unto him made answer Aeneas, and thus did he say :  
"What meanest thou, O thou child of Priam, thus to command  
That I, when I would not, against Peleides the haughty should stand ?  
Not now for the first should I look Achilles the fleet in the face.  
Nay, me in the days overpast with the spear did he hold in chase 90

From Ida, what time he had come to drive our cattle away,  
 And Lyrnessus and Pedasus smote ; but Zeus redeemed that day  
 My life, for with strength he enkindled me, lightsome my knees he made,  
 Else low by Achilles' hands and Athênê had I been laid :  
 For a light of deliverance before him she set, and commanded him still      95  
 With his brazen lance the Lelegian lives and Trojan to spill.  
 Wherefore can no man strive with Achilles in battle-strain,  
 For that ever beside him there goeth a God to defend him from bane.  
 Yea, and his lance without this flieth straight, and it doth not refrain  
 Till it plunge through the flesh of a man. But and if some God by his power  
 Would strain the issue of war but level, not me in that hour      [100  
 Should he lightly o'ercome, though fashioned wholly of brass he should be."

Answered Apollo the King Zeus-born, and thus spake he :  
 " Nay, hero, but unto the Gods everlasting do thou too pray,  
 Thou also of Aphroditê the Daughter of Zeus, men say,      105  
 Wert born, but he of a Goddess in majesty lesser than she  
 Who is Daughter of Zeus, but she of the Ancient of the Sea.  
 Have at him with stubborn brass, and in no wise let the blast  
 Of the breath of his terrible words and his threats back turn thee aghast."

Then into the shepherd of folk the God breathed valorous might,      110  
 And he rushed to the forefront of battle arrayed in brass flame-bright.  
 But the son of Anchises escaped not white-armed Hêrê's ken  
 As to meet the son of Peleus he fared through the press of men ;  
 But she gathered the Gods together, and stayed them, and uttered her rede :

" Bethink you, Poseidon now, and Athênê, and give ye heed      115

In your hearts touching this, in what fashion the issue hereof shall speed.

Yonder Aeneas arrayed in flame-bright brass is gone

Against Peleus' son, and Phoebus Apollo hath spurred him on.

But come, even thence let us turn him aback, that he waste not his life :

Or let one of us go at the least and stand by Achilles in strife, 120

And give to him strength exceeding great ; let the heart in his breast

Not in any wise faint or fail, to the end he may know that the best

Of the Deathless love him, and vain as the wind is the help of those

Which have shielded in battle and strife ere this his Trojan foes.

All we from Olympus have come to bear our part in the fray, 125

To the end he may get no hurt mid the Trojan men this day ;

But hereafter all those things shall he suffer which erst were spun

By the Fates with the threads of his birth when his mother bare a son.

But if this from the voice of the Gods Achilles shall not hear,

Then, when to meet him in battle a God shall come, he shall fear. 130

Hard is it for Gods to be looked on of men, what time they appear."

But answer to her did Poseidon the Shaker of Earth return :

"Nay, Hêrê, no need that thine anger beyond thy wisdom should burn.

I would not, I, that the Gods should clash in contention and jar,

Even we that are not as they—sooth, we be the mightier far. 135

Now nay, but turn we aside from the way to a height, and there

Let us sit us down, and for war let earth-born mortals care.

But if Arês or Phoebus Apollo shall make beginning of fight,

Or shall stay Achilles' hand and palsy his battle-might,

Straightway for us too then shall the fire of contention glow 140



Beside them : full quickly shall these give back from our onset, I trow !  
 To Olympus, where gather the rest of the Gods, shall they get them again  
 Overborne by the might of our hands, and by strong Necessity's strain."

So did he speak, and the Raven-haired led on before  
 To the mound of the rampart for godlike Hêrakles builded of yore, 145  
 High-reared, which the Trojans and Pallas Athênê wrought to heap,  
 That thereto he might flee for a covert from that huge beast of the deep,  
 Whensoe'er from the strand to the plain the monster against him should dart.  
 Thereon with Poseidon the rest of the Gods sat down apart ; [be rent. 150  
 And they compassed their shoulders with cloud, with a veil that might nowise  
 And to seat them on Kallikolônê's brow Troy's helpers went  
 Round Archer Phoebus and Arês the waster of tower and town.  
 So sundered in heart and in counsel the rest of the Gods sat down ;  
 But from making beginning of war that in anguish layeth low  
 Shrank both, though Zeus enthronèd on high had commanded so. 155  
 But with warriors thronged was the plain, and lightened with brass all round  
 From the men and the horses, and under their feet rang loud the ground,  
 As they rushed to the onset ; and twain, most mighty above the rest,  
 Eager to grapple in fight forth into the midspace pressed,  
 Aeneas, Anchises' son, and Achilles like to a God. 160  
 And Aeneas the foremost with threat and defiance forward strode,  
 While nodded his massy helmet : the shield of his fury he flung  
 In front of his breast, and his quivering lance on high he swung,  
 And overagainst him Peleides onward rushed to the strife,  
 As a ravening lion when men be furious-fain for his life, 165

As they gather, a whole tribe : he at the first recking naught of them all  
On-paceth, until with a lance some young man stalwart and tall  
Smite him : he croucheth with grinning jaws, and the foam-flakes start  
Round his fangs, and within his breast fierce groaneth his mighty heart,  
And the tail of him scourgeth his ribs and his flanks to left and to right, 170  
And he lasheth himself into frenzy, and spurreth him on to the fight,  
And glaring he rusheth in fury full on his foes, till he slay  
A man, or shall perish himself in the clash of the forest-fray :  
So Achilles was spurred of his fury and spirit dauntless-bold  
To rush to the grapple of fight with Aeneas the mighty-souled. 175  
But when, as they charged on each other, by this they were drawn full nigh,  
Then first to his foe did godlike Achilles the fleetfoot cry :

“Aeneas, now wherefore afront of the rout so far dost thou press?  
What, hath thy spirit constrained thee to meet me in battle-stress  
With the hope to be lord of the honour of Priam, the sceptred sway 180  
Over the horse-quelling Trojans?—but though thou shouldst slay me to-day  
Yet Priam shall give to thine hand for this no guerdon-crown :  
Sons hath he, nor yet overworn is his wit, nor his strength bowed down.  
Or what, have the Trojans carved thee a passing-fair domain  
For thy tilling, lovely with orchard and fields of golden grain 185  
If thou slay me?—I trow the deed shall be all too hard for thee.  
What, man, I tell thee, ere now by my spear have I caused thee to flee!  
And hast thou forgotten the day when I found thee alone, and chased  
From the kine down the ridges of Ida, when swiftly the feet of thee raced [190  
For thy life?—In that hour didst thou nowise turn thee, behind thee to look.

Thence to Lyrnessus thou fleddest ; but that thy fortress I took,  
 For with help of Athênê and Father Zeus did I storm it and smite,  
 And captive the women I led, bereft of freedom's light.  
 But thy life from destruction did Zeus and the rest of the Gods redeem :  
 Yet they shall not deliver thee now, I trow, as thine heart doth dream. 195  
 Nay, but while yet thou mayest, I bid thee give back, and go  
 Into the throng of thy friends, neither stand against me for a foe,  
 Ere thou light upon mischief :—the deed done even the fool may know."

But undismayed Aeneas made answer to him, and spake :  
 "Peleides, look not thou with thy words to cause me to quake, 200  
 As though I were naught but a babe. Good sooth, but myself could vaunt  
 With mocking lips, an I would, and babble the malapert taunt.  
 We know of each other's lineage and them that gave us birth ;  
 We have heard the tale of renown, and the praise of the children of earth :  
 But on mine with thine eyes hast thou looked never yet, neither I upon thine.  
 They name thee begotten of Peleus, a hero of princely line ; [205  
 And thy mother was bright-haired Thetis, the Lady of the Sea :  
 But Anchises the mighty-hearted was he that fathered me ;  
 And I of the womb of Aphroditê the Goddess was born.  
 Now verily these or those for a dear-loved son shall mourn 210  
 This day ; for I tell thee, not with the babbling words and vain  
 Of children, so shall we part, and return from the fight, we twain.  
 But and if thou wouldst hear this too, to the end thou mayst know it well,  
 My lineage—sooth, full many a man thereof could tell :—  
 Dardanus first did Zeus the Herder of Clouds beget, 215

And he built him Dardania, seeing that Ilium the holy as yet  
In the plain was all unpeopled, a city of earth-born men,  
But on slopes of Ida the fountain-flashing dwelt they then.  
And there sprang from Dardanus' loins Erichthonius the king, and the same  
Of all men mortal-born most mighty in wealth became. 220  
Three thousand steeds in the watered meadow were pastured for him,  
Mares, and beside them ran young foals of dainty limb.  
Yea, the North-wind saw as they pastured, his soul was stricken afire,  
And he fashioned him like to a dark-maned stallion to work his desire.  
And the mares thereafter conceived, and fillies twelve bare they : 225  
And whenso they skipped o'er the corn-giving earth in their frolic play,  
They brake not the tops of the ears of the corn as thereover they tripped :  
But whenso over the sea's broad-heaving ridges they skipped,  
Lightly they skimmed the crests of the hoary brine foam-tipped.  
Erichthonius begat king Tros, who ruled in great Troy-town ; 230  
And of Tros were begotten three, which were princes, men of renown,  
Assarakus, Ilus withal, Ganymêdes like to a God,  
For the goodliest man was he of all on the earth that trod :  
And because of his goodlihead did the high Gods snatch him away  
To pour unto Zeus the wine, and to dwell with Immortals for aye. 235  
And Ilus begat a son, Laomedon stately and tall ;  
And Tithonus sprang from Laomedon's loins, and Priam withal,  
And Lampus, and Klytius, and Arês' child Hiketaon the grim.  
Of Assarakus Kapys sprang, and Anchises was born unto him,  
And I of Anchises, but Hector the godlike of Priam came. 240



Lo, this is my lineage and blood, and the boast of a glorious name.  
But for valour, 'tis Zeus that maketh it wax upon men and wane,  
Even as seemeth him good, for in might over all doth he reign.  
Go to, let us talk not thus any more, as babbleth a child,  
Standing at gaze, while around us the tempest of war bloweth wild : 245  
For to utter revilings for thee and for me full easy it were :  
Yea, not a ship of a hundred thwarts might the load of them bear.  
For glib is the tongue of man, it hath many and manifold words ;  
This way and that way they range, as the aimless-pasturing herds ;  
And whatso manner of word thou hast spoken, the same shalt thou hear. 250  
But wherefore should thou and I with the bitter flout and the jeer  
Rail in each other's faces, as women be wont to do  
When in heart-consuming contention their fury hath thrilled them through,  
And they go forth straightway and rail on each other amidst of the street  
With false and true words many, as biddeth their passion's heat. 255  
But with words shalt thou nowise turn me away in my fury from fight  
Till man against man we have fought with the brass. Come then, forthright  
With the brazen-headed spears let us taste each other's might."

He spake, and his brazen spear at the terrible buckler sprang,  
At the awful targe ; and the shield round the lance-point loudly rang. 260  
Then afar from his body Peleides outstretched his buckler in fear  
With his brawny hand ; for he deemed in his heart that the long-shadowed spear  
Of Aeneas the mighty-hearted therethrough might lightly win.  
Ah fool, for he thought not on this his soul and his spirit within,  
That not unto perishing men is it anywise lightly given 265

Backward to bear or to vanquish the glorious gifts of heaven.  
Nor then did the furious lance of Aeneas the warrior-souled  
Burst through the shield : it was stayed by the God's gift, even the gold.  
Howbeit it pierced two plates, but there yet remained the three,  
Forasmuch as five had been forged by the Lame God's mastery, 270  
Whereof there were two of brass, and the inmost two of tin,  
And the ashen spear was stayed by the gold that lay between.  
Then hurled Achilles his lance long-shafted across the field,  
And it smote on the shapely-moulded round of Aeneas' shield  
Within the edge of the rim, where thinnest the compassing brass 275  
Ran round, and thinnest the bull-hide lay : clear through did it pass,  
That Pelian ash, and clanged the buckler beneath the blow.  
Low crouched Aeneas, and up from his body his shield did he throw  
In fear, and over his back down into the earth plunged deep  
The thirsty spear : through both of the rounded plates did it leap 280  
Of the warrior-warding shield : unscathed by the lance he stood,  
But over the eyes of him measureless horror poured as a flood,  
Aghast that the javelin had smitten so near : but with furious hand  
Achilles unsheathed, as he rushed on the Trojan, his keen-whetted brand  
With a terrible shout ; but a crag hath the hand of Aeneas found, 285  
A huge rock-shard, which not two men should upheave from the ground,  
Such men as be now ; yet lightly he swung it on high alone.  
Then had Aeneas in mid rush smitten his foe with the stone  
On helmet or shield, which warded Achilles from bitter death, [290  
And Peleides had closed with him then, and his sword had bereft him of breath ;

But with swift keen glance Poseidon espied it, the Earth-shaking Lord ;  
And straightway he spake in the midst of the deathless Gods the word :

“ Lo now, for Aeneas the mighty-souled have I anguish of heart,  
Who with speed overcome by Achilles shall down unto Hades depart,  
For he heeded the Smiter from Far, and hearkened Apollo's rede,— 295  
Ah fool ! from destruction he shall not redeem him in bitter need !

Yet wherefore should he who is guiltless to-day be afflicted sore  
Without cause, that the guilty may suffer not woes, though his gifts evermore  
Were welcome and sweet to the Gods in the broad-arched heaven which abide?  
Nay come, let us, even us, his head from destruction hide, 300  
Lest the wrath of Kronion be kindled, if this man haply should fall  
Slain by Achilles. His weird is safely to win through all,

Lest haply a royal seed perish, and leave on the earth no trace  
Of Dardanus, dearest to Kronos' Son of the earth-born race,  
Both men and women, that sprang from the loins of the Thunder-lord. 305  
For now hath the House of Priam of Kronos' Son been abhorred ;  
But a sceptre over the Trojans the might of Aeneas shall sway,  
Yea, and his children's children, the men of an unborn day.”

Made answer to him Queen Hêrê the Lovely-eyed, and she spake :  
‘ Take thought in thine own soul, Shaker of Earth, for Aeneas' sake, 310  
Whether to rescue from death, or to leave him there alone  
To be slain, how valiant soc'er, by Achilles Peleus' son.  
For verily oaths we twain have sworn, yea, many an one,  
Athênê and I, before all the Gods that endure for aye,  
That we never will shield any child of Troy from the evil day, 315

No, not when all Troy burneth consumed in the ravening flame,  
And the warrior sons of Achaia are they that kindle the same."

When Poseidon the Shaker of Earth heard this that she spake in his ears,  
He hied him away through the fight and the clash of the meeting spears,  
And he came where Aeneas stood, and Achilles the glorious lord. 320  
Eftsoons o'er the eyes of Achilles Peleus' son he poured  
A mist and a sudden darkness: the ashen shaft brass-shod  
From the shield of the mighty-hearted Aeneas drew the God.  
And in front of the feet of Achilles the lance on the earth did he lay;  
But he lifted Aeneas on high from the earth, and he bore him away. 325  
Over many a rank of heroes, o'er many a battle-car,  
Soared in the hand of the God Aeneas bounding afar,  
Until at the uttermost part of the rushing battle he stayed,  
At the place wherein the Kaukonian men for the war were arrayed.  
And lo, the Shaker of Earth Poseidon stood by his side; 330  
And he lifted his voice unto him, and with light-winged words he cried:  
"What God's command, Aeneas, hath made thee senseless bold  
Man against man to fight with Peleides the dauntless-souled,  
Who is mightier than thou, and dearer withal to the Gods, I wis?  
But get thee back, whensoever thou lightest on him after this, 335  
Lest even beyond thy weird thou pass unto Hades' hall.  
But whensoever the death and the doom on Achilles shall fall,  
Then take thou courage and fight in the foremost ranks of the fray,  
For thee none other of all the Achaian host shall slay."  
So spake he, and left him there, when all the warning was said: 340



And straightway the magic mist o'er the eyes of Achilles shed  
He scattered apart : and lo, the hero with wide eyes gazed,  
And he spake to his mighty-hearted spirit sore amazed :

“ Ha, but a marvel of marvels is this that I see with mine eyes !  
Here lieth my lance on the earth, but I see not in any wise 345  
The man upon whom with intent to slay him I hurled that spear.  
Of a surety Aeneas too to the deathless Gods is dear ;  
Yet I deemed that his boast thereof was idle vaunt and vain !  
Away with him then ! Small heart shall he have to prove me again,  
Seeing that even to-day he hath 'scaped from the death full fain. 350  
But the battle-revelling Danaan men will I cheer to the fight,  
And the rest of my Trojan foes will I meet, and make proof of their might.”

Then cried he to every man, swift-leaping the ranks before :  
“ Now shrink ye aback from the Trojans, O godlike Achaïans, no more,  
But man against man go forth, and keen for the battle be ye. 355  
What though I be never so stalwart, hard were the task for me  
To fall on so countless a host, and to battle with every one.  
Not of deathless Arês' self, nor Athênê, might this be done,  
To plunge mid the jaws of so mighty a strife, and to toil therein.  
But for me, unto whatsoever by hands and by feet I may win, 360  
And by strength, shall no slackness in me, be it never so little, be seen,  
But clear through their ranks will I burst : no man of the Trojans, I ween,  
Shall rejoice, who shall draw near me, who shall try if my spear be keen.”

So spake he, cheering them on : but Hector the glorious cried  
With shouts on the Trojan men, and Achilles' self he defied : 365

"High-hearted Trojans, from Peleus' son do ye nowise quail !  
 I too with the very Immortals would fight, if but words might avail,  
 But hard were the task with the spear, for our might do they far exceed.  
 Nay, not even Achilles shall bring each word to the deed,  
 But in part shall accomplish his vaunt, and in part cut short his desire. 370  
 Lo, I will go forth to meet him, yea, though his hands be as fire,  
 Yea, though as fire be his hands, though as steel be the edge of his ire."

So cried he, cheering them on, and the Trojans against their foes  
 Uplifted their spears, and their fury was mingled, the battle-cry rose.  
 But to Hector's side came Phoebus Apollo, and thus did he say : 375

"Hector, beware that thou challenge Achilles not to the fray ;  
 But thou mid the throng, and begirt by the tumult, his onslaught stand,  
 Lest he smite thee with cast of the spear, or with sweep of the battle-brand."

He spake ; back into the press of the fighters Hector strode,  
 Awe-struck when fell on his ears the sound of the voice of a God. 380  
 Mid the Trojans Achilles leapt, his heart clad in might as a cloak,  
 With a terrible shout. To Iphition dealt he the first death-stroke,  
 The goodly son of Otryntes, a captain of many folk,  
 Whom the Maid of the Spring to Otryntes the city-waster bare  
 'Neath Tmolus the snowy, in Hydê the fertile land and fair. 385  
 But, as onward he charged, him godlike Achilles smote with the spear  
 In the midst of the head, and all in twain was it cloven sheer.  
 Loud-crashing he fell, and Achilles shouted the triumph-jeer :

"Low liest thou, son of Otryntes, doughtiest of all men on earth !  
 Ha, here is thy death, but afar by Gygaiê the mere was thy birth, 390

Even there where thy father's possessions cover the fat land o'er  
By Hyllus the fish-abounding and swirling Hermus' shore."

So vaunting he spake, and darkness swept o'er the eyes of the slain.  
And the horses Achaian cut with the tires that wretch in twain  
In the forefront of fight : then down on his body Demoleon he flung, 395  
A battle-helper stout, of the loins of Antenor sprung ;  
For his temples, clean through the morion brazen-checked, did he pierce,  
Neither stayed by the helmet of brass was the spear, but eager-fierce  
Therethrough did the point burst, cleaving the bone, and all his brain  
Was scattered within : so he slew him though never so battle-fain. 400  
Thereafter Hippodamas, even as he sprang from his chariot in fear,  
Fleeing before him, amidst of the back he smote with his spear.  
And he gasped his spirit forth, and like to the bull he roared  
That is dragged with bellowing loud to the altar of Heliké's Lord,  
As the young men drag—for in such doth the Earth-shaker take delight,— 405  
Even so did he roar as the haughty soul from his bones took flight.  
Then with his spear he pursued Polydorus, a godlike wight,  
Offspring of Priam. The old king wholly forbade him the fight,  
Forasmuch as amidst his brethren youngest of all was the lad,  
And was dearest to him, and in fleetness of foot no peer he had. 410  
Even then in his folly he rushed through the foremost ranks of the host,  
Making display of his speed, till the precious life he lost.  
Him fleetfoot Achilles the godlike smote with a dart mid-waist  
In the back, as the lad rushed past, where the golden buckles braced  
The baldric-band, and the corslet-plates overlapping lay. 415

Forth by the navel the point of the javelin flashed to the day,  
And he fell on his knees with a shriek, and veiled him a black dark cloud,  
And his bowels he clasped unto him with his hands as earthward he bowed.  
But when Hector beheld Polydorus his brother cast on the field,  
Holding his bowels in his hands as down to the earth he reeled, 420  
His eyes in the mist of his horror swam, he endured no more  
To range the battle aloof, but down on Achilles he bore  
Shaking his keen lance, flamelike. Exultation-stirred  
Leapt, as he saw it, Achilles, and cried the triumphant word :

“ Ha, nigh me at last is the man who deepest hath stricken mine heart, 425  
Who hath slain mine honoured companion ! No more shall we cower apart,  
Nor through highways of battle as dastards aback from each other shall start ! ”

Then spake he to Hector the godlike, and grim did the eyes of him glare :  
“ Draw nigh, that the sooner thy feet to the goal of destruction may fare ! ”

But Hector the stormy-crested answered him undismayed : 430  
“ Peleides, look not thou with thy words to make me afraid,  
As though I were naught but a child : good sooth, but myself could vaunt  
With mocking lips, an I would, and babble the malapert taunt.

I know that mighty thou art : far weaker than thou am I.  
Yet verily all these things on the knees of the high Gods lie. 435  
Peradventure, how weaker soe’er, I shall take thy life, even thine,  
With a spear-cast ; for keen heretofore hath been this lance of mine.”

He spake, and he swung up on high and he hurled that spear ; but the breath  
Of Athênê turned backward from glorious Achilles the lightning of death.  
Full lightly she blew, yet aback unto Hector the godlike it came, 440



And afront of his feet it fell. Then rushed with spirit aflame  
 Achilles full on his foe, mad eager to smite him and slay,  
 Shouting his terrible shout : but Apollo snatched him away  
 With the effortless strength of a God, and in deep mist shrouded him round.  
 Thrice did Achilles the godlike, the fleetfoot, onward bound 445  
 With his brazen spear, and thrice but the thickness of mist did he pierce.  
 But when for the fourth time he rushed like a God in his anger fierce,  
 Terribly shouting then with wingèd words did he cry :

“Ha, thou hast ’scaped from the death, thou dog!—but thy bane came nigh,  
 Full nigh thee ! ’Tis Phoebus Apollo again hath saved thee, I trow. 450  
 Of a surety thou prayest him ere to the hurtling of lances thou go !  
 I will yet make an end of thee!—yea, we shall meet, and our strife shall be  
 If with me too haply a helper be found of the Dwellers in Heaven. [striven,  
 Now will I set on the rest, whosoe’er to mine hands shall be given.”

He spake, and at Dryops amidst of the neck with his javelin he thrust : 455  
 Down fell he in front of his feet ; but he left him to lie in the dust,  
 And Demuchus, son of Philêtor, a warrior tall and brave,  
 He stayed, with a spear-cast piercing his knee ; and with mighty glaive  
 Thereafter he thrust him through, and his life from his limbs hath he torn.  
 On Laogonus then, and on Dardanus, sons unto Bias born, 460  
 Rushed he, and both from the chariot down to the earth he dashed ;  
 One smote he with cast of the spear, and one with his sword he slashed.  
 Then Tros the son of Alastor—the wretch at his knees grovelled low,  
 Claspings them round, if he haply would spare, and alive let him go,  
 Neither slay him, but have compassion on youth like his own, and forbear. 465

Ah fool!—for he knew not this, that no more would he hearken to prayer ;  
For a man was he nowise sweet of spirit nor kindly-souled,  
But exceeding fierce. Yet around his knees his hands did he fold  
All eager to make supplication,—down plunged through his liver the sword.  
Forth slid from his body his liver : the dark blood down from it poured 470  
Flooding his bosom, and over his eyes the death-mist flowed,  
As fainted his spirit. Then with his spear unto Mulius he strode,  
And stabbed 'neath the ear ; and straightway the brazen point passed on  
Through its fellow ear. Then smote he Echeklus, Agênor's son,  
On the midst of his head with the sword, that the hilt stood forth alone ; 475  
And the blade's whole length grew warm in the blood, and the lurid gloom  
Of death rushed over his eyes, and the overmastering doom.  
Deukalion next did he smite ; for where at the elbow-joint  
The sinews meet, he drave with his lance's brazen point  
Clear through his arm. There stood he with heavy-drooping hand 480  
With death in his sight. So Achilles lashed at his neck with the brand :  
Far hurled he the head with the helmet : upshot through the backbone of him  
The marrow, and stretched on the earth lay headless trunk and limb.  
Then Peireus' princely son the destroyer held in chase,  
Rhigmus : the warrior had come from the fruitful land of Thrace. 485  
In the midst with his javelin he smote him : the brass in his lung stood deep,  
And he fell from his car : on his henchman Arêthoüs did he leap,  
As flightward he wheeled the steeds ; then thrust he the keen-whetted spear  
Through his back, and he dashed him to earth, and the steeds plunged mad with  
As rageth an awful fire on a mountain parched with drought, [fear

Through its hollow glens, when the flames in the heart of the wood burst out,  
And the wild winds buffet the blaze, and roll it far and wide ;  
With the spear like an angry God so rushed he on every side,  
Pursuing and slaying the while ; and with blood did the dark earth stream.  
And as when one yoketh together his bulls, a broad-browed team, 495  
In a fair-built threshing-floor to trample the barley white,  
And fast from beneath the loud-lowers' feet the chaff leapeth light ;  
So before great-heart Achilles the thunderfoot steeds of his car  
Trampled the corpses and shields ; and with blood was the axle-bar  
All dashed from beneath, and blood on the rails of the chariot rained 500  
Upsplashed from the crimson pools as the thundering hoofs on-strained,  
Whirled wide from the madding tires. On, fierce for renown, he sped,  
Peleides, and stained his invincible hands with the blood of the dead.

## BOOK XXI.

*Of the River that ran with blood, and the strife of a God with a mortal.*

**B**UT when they were come to the ford of the beautiful-flowing river,  
Of swirling Xanthus, the child of Zeus that abideth for ever,  
There cleft he the fleers asunder : some of them plainward he chased  
To the town, on the path whereby the Achaïans in panic-struck haste  
But yesterday fled from glorious Hector's battle-wrath. 5  
There they went pouring in horror of rout, and before their path  
A thick mist Hêrê spread, and the half of them, onward hurling,  
Into the river were huddled, the deep-channelled, silyer-swirling.  
With a mighty plashing and roar of the cataract torrent they fell :  
On this side and that loud echoed the banks, and with shout and yell 10  
Here battled and there with the rush of the eddies the drowning crowd.  
And as when from the fire-blast fleeth a hovering locust-crowd  
To a river, while hard behind them the tireless flames come leaping  
Swiftly, and down to the flood the cowering swarm goes sweeping ;  
Even so in the flight from Achilles were Xanthus' deep swirls then 15



Filled with confusion and din of chariots and horses and men.

But the Zeus-born left his spear propped up by a tamarisk-tree  
On the bank, and into the stream like an angry God leapt he [grim ;  
With naught save his sword, but the deeds that he purposed were bitter and  
And on this side and that side he smote, and the groan and the ghastly scream  
Arose from the falchion-hewn, and the water was crimsoned with blood. [20  
And even as the fish from a dolphin, the monster-beast of the flood,  
Flee, till the throng of them filleth the creeks of a sheltered bay,  
In their dread, for the spoiler devoureth whatso he maketh his prey ;  
So the Trojans adown that terrible river's rushing water 25  
Under the steep banks covered. When his hands grew weary of slaughter,  
Twelve high-born youths from the river he dragged alive, to atone  
With their blood ere long for the death of Patroclus, Menoitius' son,  
Dragged them ashore terror-palsied, like fawns that the hunters have found,  
And their hands behind them with shapely-fashioned thongs he bound, 30  
Even the thongs that they wore on their pleated tunics gay.  
To his comrades he gave them, to lead to the hollow galleys away ;  
And he rushed on the fleers again unglutted, and mad to slay.  
There on a child of Priam Dardanus' son did he light,  
Fleeing forth from the river, Lykaon :—himself erewhile in the night 35  
Anigh to the city had drawn, and had seized him and dragged him away.  
For the lad in his father's vineyard stood in the dawning grey,  
Cutting him wild-fig shoots, to fashion a chariot-rail :  
And or ever he knew was Achilles the godlike there for his bale.  
With his galleys he sent him to Lemnos, the city of stately wall, 40

And he sold him : the son of Iêson paid the price of the thrall.  
 But a bond-friend redeemed him, laying a mighty ransom down,  
 Eëtion of Imbros, and sent him to hallowed Arisbê-town.  
 Thence fled he in secret, and came to his father's house again.  
 For eleven days' space with his friends had he gladdened his heart full fain 45  
 From Lemnos returned ; on the twelfth once more by a God was he cast  
 Into the hands of Achilles ; and now shall the hero at last  
 Speed him to Hades, loth upon that drear journey to fare.  
 And so soon as swift-footed Achilles the godlike beheld him there  
 Fenceless of helmet and shield,—no spear in his hands he bore ; 50  
 All had he cast on the earth, for the toil-sweat galled him sore  
 From the river essaying to flee, and faint were his knees and weak ;—  
 Then in wrathful amaze to his mighty heart did the hero speak :  
 “ Ha ! and what marvel is this that now with mine eyes I see !  
 Surely the very Trojans, the heroes slain by me, 55  
 Shall again rise up from the dead, and return from the shadowland home,  
 Seeing this man hath 'scaped from the pitiless day, and is hitherward come !  
 Into bondage in Lemnos the hallowed I sold him :—he stayed not, he,  
 For the fetters that bind full many, the arms of the hoary sea !  
 Go to—this time shall he taste of the point of my spear, and so 60  
 Mine heart shall be certified, and I shall surely know  
 If in like manner thence he shall win his way, or shall lie full long  
 In the arms of the life-giver Earth, the warder of the strong.”

So mused he, and tarried : the wretch terror-palsied crept to his feet,  
 Full fain to have clasped his knees, and it seemed to his soul most sweet 65

To escape from the bitter death and the black doom drawing near.  
 High had Achilles the godlike uplifted the long-shadowed spear  
 Eager to stab—but he rushed and he clasped his knees around,  
 Low-crouching, and over his back flew the javelin, and fast in the ground  
 Stood, thrilling with lust to be filled with the flesh and the blood of the foe. 70  
 But he with the one hand clung, and besought, at his knees bowed low ;  
 With the other he clutched the lance, and he would not let it go ;  
 And with quivering lips he gasped forth terror-winged words of prayer :

“I bow at thy knees, O Achilles, have mercy upon me and spare !  
 Zeus-nurtured, I stand unto thee in the sacred suppliant's stead, 75  
 For at thy board first did I taste Dêmêter's gift of bread,  
 In the day when thou tookest me captive in that fair garth of the vine,  
 And didst send me away from my sire and my friends far over the brine  
 Unto Lemnos the hallowed : a hecatomb's price for thee I won,  
 And for thrice so much was I ransomed. It was but the twelfth day's sun 80  
 That arose this morn since I came again to the Troyland shore  
 After manifold sufferings : now am I given to thine hands once more  
 By a baneful doom : ah, surely Zeus Allfather must hate  
 The man that again he hath cast unto thee ! To a short-lived fate  
 Laothœ bare me, the daughter of Altes ; yet doth he reign, 85  
 An old king, over the Lelegan folk, the battle-fain,  
 Where Pegasus looks from her mountain eyry on Satniois.  
 His child took Priam,—yea, many a princess beside, I wis ;—  
 With me was there born one brother, and lo, thou wilt kill us twain !  
 Him in the forefront of battle hast thou overmastered and slain, 90

Polydorus the godlike : the sharp lance sped from thine hand, and he fell.  
And for me shall this hour be the hour of my bane, for I know full well  
I shall 'scape not thine hand, whom a God hath driven to cross thy path.  
Yet this will I tell thee,—O lay it to heart for a curb to thy wrath !—

Ah, slay me not, for not in the selfsame womb had I part 95  
As Hector, who slew thy friend of the strong hand, merciful heart."

So spake that son of Priam, with passionate-pleading word  
Asking his life ; but a pitiless voice and a stern he heard :

" Fool, babble not ransom to me, neither multiply words for naught !  
Or ever Patroclus the lost to the day of his doom was brought, 100

So long were the lives of the captives of Troy more dear unto me  
Than their death ; and I took full many alive, and sold oversea.  
But now is there none shall escape from death, whosoever shall fall  
Into mine hands by the wrath of a God before Ilium's wall,

Not a Trojan, and least of them all shall any Priam's son. 105

Nay, die thou too, my friend : what boots it to make this moan ?  
Far nobler than thou was Patroclus—he could not choose but die.  
Seest thou not how goodly and fair and tall am I ?

A princely father begat me, a Goddess mother bore :  
Yet my death and the overmastering doom are hard by the door. 110

It shall hap in the dawn or the eventide, or the noon of the day,  
That some one shall take my life, even mine, in the midst of the fray :  
With the cast of a spear, or a shaft fleeing far from the string, shall he slay."

So spake he, and there were his knees and his very heart unstrung.  
He unhanded the spear ; he sank back with arms wide open flung. 115



Out of the scabbard Achilles had snatched his battle-brand keen ;  
 Down on the collar-bone hard by the neck hath the double-edged sheen  
 Plungèd out of sight. And there on his face outstretched on the ground  
 He lay, and the dark blood welled and drenched the earth around.

By the foot did Achilles seize him, and into the river he flung, 120  
 And the mock triumphant rang as the winged words leapt from his tongue :

“ Now lie thou there mid the fishes : with careless care shall they lick  
 Thy blood from the wound. Ha, never that mother of thine, heart-sick,  
 On a bier shall outstretch thee and wail, but Skamander, thy restless grave,  
 Swirling shall bear thee adown to the sea’s broad-heaving wave. 125  
 Darting from under a shiver of darkling ripple shall spring  
 The fish, to devour Lykaon’s fat white-glistening.

So perish ye all, till we win Troy’s sacred citadel’s height,  
 Perish, the while ye flee, and with havoc I follow your flight !  
 Of the fair-flowing, silver-swirling Stream shall ye win no aid, 130  
 Unto whom long time with slaughter of many a bull ye have prayed,  
 And alive in his eddies have whelmed the horses for sacrifice ;  
 But a bitter death shall ye die, till ye all shall have paid the price  
 Of Patroclus’ death, and the bane of Achaia’s hosts of war  
 Whom ye slew by the fleet-winged galleys while yet was their champion afar.”  
 Then at his taunt was the heart of the River stirred with ire ; [135  
 And he mused in his spirit how he should quench the battle-fire  
 Of Achilles the godlike, and save the Trojans from bane drawn near.  
 And it was so, that Peleus’ son, high-lifting the long-shadowed spear,  
 With a purpose of death in his heart upon Asteropaius was leaping,— 140

Pelegon's son, and his sire of the Axius' flood broad-sweeping  
 Was born, and of Periboia : the eldest she was of the daughters  
 Of Akessamenus, and the bride of the Stream's deep-swirling waters :—  
 Upon him did Achilles rush ; but forth from the river he pressed  
 With lances twain to face him ; and Xanthus filled his breast 145  
 With courage, for wroth for the strong men slain in the battle was he,  
 Whom Achilles was slaughtering down his stream un pityingly.  
 Now when they were drawn anigh, as against each other they strode,  
 First spake unto him swift-footed Achilles like to a God :

“ Who art thou, and whence among men, who hast dared to cross my path ?  
 The sons of wretched parents be they that brave my wrath.” [150

But Pelegon's glorious son made answer dauntlessly :  
 “ Peleides the mighty-hearted, what is my birth unto thee ?  
 I come from the fair fat land of Paionia far away  
 Leading her long-speared warriors : now the eleventh day 155  
 Hath dawned from the time when first on the Troyland shore I stood,  
 And as touching my birth, I am sprung of the broad-flowing Axius' flood—  
 Axius, fairest of waters on all the earth that be found,—  
 Of him was begotten the hero Pelegon spear-renowned :  
 His son do they call me. Now fight we, Achilles glory-crowned.” 160

So rang his defiance forth. But Achilles on high hath swung  
 The Pelian ash. Now the hero Asteropaius flung  
 Two lances together, for either hand was battle-skilled.  
 And the one spear smote on the targe, yet not clean through the shield  
 Did it burst, for 'twas stayed by the gold, a God's gift adamant-hard. 165

By the other 'twixt elbow and wrist was the hero's right arm scarred.  
Forth spouted the dark-hued blood ; but the spear flew over amain,  
And it plunged in the earth, fierce-longing to feast on the flesh of the slain.  
Then, then with his lance true-flying did hero Achilles throw  
At Asteropaius, eager in death to lay him low. 170  
But lo, he hath missed, and the spear hath struck the high-ridged bank :  
Half-length deep in the earth the ashen javelin sank.  
But Peleides hath snatched from his thigh his keen-edged battle-brand,  
And in fury he sprang on the foe, while he tugged with his brawny hand  
To wrench from the bank the lance of Achilles—but all in vain. 175  
Thrice did he tug, while it quivered beneath that desperate strain :  
Thrice must his sinews forbear ; but the fourth, his soul was fain  
To have bended and snapped the shaft of Aiakus' son in twain :  
Too late—for Achilles was on him, and smote out his life with the sword ;  
For hard by the navel he stabbed him, and forth of the grim gash poured 180  
All his bowels to the ground, and a mist and a darkness swept  
Over his eyes as he gasped. On his breast hath Achilles leapt,  
And he stripped his battle-gear, and shouted in triumph-scorn :  
“ Lie there ! Hard is it for thee to battle with heroes born  
Of Kronion the mighty, although thou be sprung of a River-god's line. 185  
Ha, and thou vauntest the race of a broad-flowing river for thine !  
But for me, of Zeus most high do I boast my descent to be ;  
And the king of the Myrmidon thousands was he that fathered me,  
Peleus Aiakus' son ; and of Zeus did Aiakus spring.  
Stronger is Zeus than the Rivers seaward-murmuring. 190

Stronger withal are the children of Zeus than a River's seed,  
Lo there a great River beside thee to help, if he can, in thy need !  
Nay, there is none that in battle with Zeus Kronion may stand :  
Not Lord Acheloüs himself against him dare lift his hand ;  
No, nor the mighty strength of Ocean's fathomless flow, 195  
Forth out of whom all rivers and all the sea-waves go,  
And all deep-slumbering wells and fountains sunlight-plashing :  
Yet he too standeth in awe of the lightning of Zeus far-flashing,  
And his terrible thunder, when all the shuddering heavens are crashing."  
So spake he, and forth of the bank the brazen lance he tare, 200  
And he left the man whose heart he had plucked out lying there  
On the sands ; and the dusky water lapped him the while he lay,  
And the coiling eels and the fishes were swarming around the prey,  
Rending the fat of the reins with ravenous teeth away.  
But Achilles was gone : by the side of the eddying river he sped, 205  
Where the rout of the tossing crests of Paionia's warriors fled,  
When they saw how their champion was fallen amidst of the desperate strife,  
How the might of the hands and the sword of Achilles had reft his life.  
Thersilochus, Mydon, and Astypylus hath he stretched on the plain ;  
Mnêsus, and Thrasius, and Ainius, and Ophlestes are slain : 210  
And many Paionians more by the hand of Achilles had died,  
But the Stream deep-swirling spake, in his wrath that he turned not aside :  
In the shape of a man he uprose from the depth of an eddy, and cried :  
" Mighty art thou, Achilles, and lawless the deeds of thine hand  
Above all men, for aye do the Gods by thy side in the battle stand. 215



If so be that Kronion hath given thee all the Trojans to kill,  
 First drive them from me to the plain : there work thy fiendish will.  
 For my lovely streams are filled with the folk that in battle have died ;  
 No more can I pour my waters adown to the great sea-tide :  
 They be choked with the corpses ; and still art thou slaying : 'tis ghastly to see.  
 O refrain thee, captain of war-folk : horror hath seized upon me." [220

Answered Achilles the fleetfoot, and undismayed cried he :  
 "As thou biddest, Skamander the heaven-fed, so in the end shall it be :  
 Not yet,—for I will not refrain me from slaughtering this proud foe,  
 Till I chase them to Troy, and be face to face with Hector, and know 225  
 Whether he shall be conqueror then, or I shall lay him low."

Then like an avenging God on the Trojans he rushed as they fled ;  
 And thereat the Stream deep-swirling cried to Apollo, and said :

"Fie on thee, Silverbow, Kronion's son ! Why then [230  
 Hast thou kept not the counsel of Zeus, who commanded thee once and again  
 To abide by the Trojan folk, and defend them from bane, till the coming  
 Of the eventide, when the fields wax shadowy-dim in the gloaming ?"

He spake ; but Achilles the spear-renowned from the bank had leapt  
 To the stream, but with cataract surge the River against him swept,  
 Tossing a turmoil of torrents, and hurling the host of the slain 235  
 Onward, till squadrons of dead on the slayer were charging again.  
 And he roared as a bull, and he cast forth on to the land those dead ;  
 And he wrought to deliver the living that down his fair streams fled,  
 Casting about them the screen of his eddies deep and wide.  
 Round the hero the terrible surge towered seething on every side : 240

And a cataract dashed and crashed on his shield : all vainly he sought  
Firm ground for his feet : with his hands at a mighty elm he caught,  
A wide-spreading tree ; but bowing aslant from its loosened roots  
It breached the bank to the water's edge, and with myriad shoots  
Lashed the beautiful waters, and forward flung full length 245  
Bridged over the river. He sprang from the swirl with his uttermost strength,  
And with feet terror-winged rushed thence to fly across the plain.  
But the strong God ceased not now, but he leapt upon him again  
Black-crested, that godlike Achilles might evermore refrain  
Thereafter from battle-toil, and the Trojans be shielded from bane. 250  
Bounded Peleides as far as a battle-flung javelin may fly,  
And his leap was the swoop of the eagle, the black-winged scourge of the sky,  
Which is strongest of sinew and fleetest of pinion of all winged things ;  
So seemed he in darting :—lo, on his breast how the battle-gear rings  
Terribly clashing ! With swift swerve suddenly turning aside 255  
He fled, but the roar followed fast and the rush of the cataract tide.  
And even as a husbandman leadeth adown from a spring dark-flowing  
A runnel amidst of his plants and his gardens sultry-glowing,  
While, mattock in hand, he is clearing the clods from the channel still,  
And the gleaming pebbles are rolled along by the gushing rill, 260  
And swiftly it poureth adown with laughter and tinkling song  
By the fall of the land, outrunning the man as he guides it along :  
Even so was Achilles outstripped evermore by the river-surge then,  
Swift as he was, for the Gods be stronger far than men.  
And as often as fleetfoot Achilles the godlike turned on his foe 265

And gathered his strength to face his fury of onset, and know  
 If all were against him that dwell in the broad-arched heaven for ever,  
 So often the mighty surge of the heaven-descended River  
 Dashed down from above on his shoulders. High with his feet did he leap  
 Chafing in anguish : the river with furious under-sweep 270  
 Overmastered his knees, and dragged from his feet the sand ever-shifting.  
 And Peleides groaned, to the broad-arched heaven his eyes uplifting :  
 " Allfather, will none of the Gods come down in my pitiful strait  
 From the river to save me ?—Thereafter I care not what be my fate !  
 None of the Heaven-abiders is guilty of this in mine eyes 275  
 So much as my mother : 'twas she that beguiled me with promise of lies.  
 For she said that beneath the brazen-corsleted Trojans' wall  
 By the swift-flying shafts of Apollo amidst of the fray I should fall.  
 O had Hector but killed me, the mightiest one of the sons of the land !  
 Then had a hero slain me, a hero had died by his hand. 280  
 But now am I doomed by a pitiful death to be spoiled of renown,  
 Trapped by a swollen river, even as a swineherd clown,  
 A boy that is drowned in a gully when winter floods come down !"  
 So spake he, and all in a moment Poseidon and Pallas were there  
 Hard by his side, and the forms of the children of men they bare ; 285  
 And they spake to him comforting words with hand troth-clasped in hand.  
 And first did Poseidon cheer him, the Shaker of the Land :  
 " Quake not exceedingly, Peleus' son, nor be sore afraid :  
 For behold what manner of helpers be here on thy side arrayed,—  
 And Zeus sayeth yea thereunto,—even Pallas Athênê and I. 290

It is not thy weird by the wrath of such as a River to die.

He shall weary full soon, and forbear ; thou shalt see it in very deed.

And we counsel thee straitly thus, if thou wilt hearken our rede —

See thou refrain not thine hands from the strife of the wavering fray

Till in Ilium's walls thou hast penned the Trojans' war-array, 295

Even all yon fleers : and take thou Hector's life away

Ere thou come to the galleys again. Lo, we give thee renown this day." [word :

To the place of the Deathless they gat them, when thus they had spoken the

But he went—for his heart by the hest of the Gods was mightily stirred—

On to the plain. But all with the floods outpoured was filled, 300

And much fair harness and corpses of strong men battle-killed

Were swept to and fro. But his knees leapt high victoriously :

Right onward against the torrent he plunged : he stayed not, he,

For the broad-rushing River : Athênê mightily strengthened him.

Yet Skamander forebore not his fury ; his wrath waxed yet more grim 305

Against Peleus' son ; and with surge like a helmet-crest tossed high

He uplifted himself, and to Simoïs called with a mighty cry :

" Dear brother, let thou and I in any wise stay this foe ;

Else soon shall he lay the mighty city of Priam low,

And the host of the Trojan folk no more shall abide in the fight. 310

Come to mine help with speed : fill thou my streams to the height

With floods from thy springs ; bid all thy mountain-torrents leap :

Uplift thou a mighty surge, and charge with a thunderous sweep

Of trunks and of stones, to the end we may cause this savage to stay

Who is triumphing now, and is fain to defy the Gods this day. 315



For I say that his strength shall avail him not, nor his goodlihead,  
 Nor his splendid battle-gear, which shall lie all slime-overspread  
 Far down in the depths of the mere, and himself shall be shrouded o'er  
 With sand, and shingle around him, a measureless heap, will I pour.  
 Never the sons of Achaia on this man's bones shall light 320  
 To gather them up; such a mountain of silt shall veil him from sight.  
 Yea, there shall his barrow be heaped; no need shall they have, not they,  
 To uppile him a sepulchre-mound when Achaians his death-rites pay."

So spake he, and rushed on Achilles the stormy-seething flood  
 High-tossing, and roaring with foam and with dead men's bodies and blood.  
 And thundercloud-black the surge of the heaven-fallen River towered  
 Ever higher, and Peleus' son had he now well-nigh overpowered.  
 But Hêrê shouted aloud,—for her heart was sore adread  
 Lest the swirling river should drag Achilles down to the dead,—  
 And straightway she cried on Hephaistus her well-loved son, and she said: 330

"Haltfoot, arise, my son!—we have found thee a battle-peer!  
 Lo, Xanthus the swirling River arrayed against thee here!  
 Haste thee, stand up for mine help: fling forth thy flame-banner wide!  
 And I will away, and call fierce blasts from the wild sea-tide,  
 The blast of the West, and the South that sweepeth the heaven cloud-clear, 335  
 Which shall burn up the heads of his Trojan slain, and their battle-gear,  
 Rolling onward the ravening flame. And thou by Xanthus' shore  
 Burn up the trees, flash fire to his depths, and forbear nevermore  
 For soft words praying, neither for curses a whit shalt thou care.  
 But slack not the might of thy godhead, till I shall command thee to spare 340  
 h

With a mighty shout: stay thou thy tameless fireblast there."

Then at her hest Hephaistus the flame god-kindled arrayed.

First over the plain the fireblast swept: on the corpses it preyed;

For heaps upon heaps they lay where Achilles had wrought that slaughter.

Parched was the plain all over, and shrank the shining water. 345

And as when in the latter summer the north-wind drieth again

A watered garden with speed, that the tiller thereof is fain,

Even so was the plain all parched, and the corpses he utterly burned;

And against the River thereafter his flame far-flashing he turned.

And lo, they were blazing—the elms and the willows, the tamarisk-bushes; 350

And the lotos leapt into flame, and the galingale and the rushes

By the beautiful streams of the river thickly fringing the shore.

And the eels and the fishes through all his swirls were tormented sore;

And writhing they plunged through the lovely waters here and there:

By the blast of Hephaistus the Craft-king sore tormented they were. 355

Yea, the Might of the River is burning, and lo, he gaspeth a prayer:

"Hephaistus, none of the Gods may stand before thine ire!

No spirit is in me to battle against thy flaming fire.

O refrain thee from strife!—an thou wilt, let Achilles utterly drive

Troy's folk from their city:—what do I in battle-aid to strive?" 360

All burning he spake, while bubbled his streams in the fervent glow.

And as boileth a caldron within, when a great fire blazeth below,

And the spume spurts forth all round, as the fat of a sleek-fed boar

Is seething therein, and below dry billets be spread good store;

So wrapped in flame were his streams, and the water boiled evermore: 365

No spirit was in him to flow, but he stayed, tormented sore  
 By the breath of the Might of Hephaistus the Craft-king. In anguished despair  
 Cried he at last unto Hêrê with wild-winged words of prayer :

“O Hêrê, why hath thy son upon my streams fallen, alone  
 Of all others, to vex me ? Herein not I am the guiltiest one, 370  
 But all the rest of the Gods on the side of the Trojans that stand.  
 Lo now I refrain from the battle, if this be thy command.

O let him also refrain ! I will swear this oath withal,  
 Never to shield Troy's folk when their evil day shall befall ;  
 No, not when with ravening fire all Troy shall be burnt to the ground 375  
 Flame-wrapped, and the sons of Achaia shall burn it, the war-renowned.”

When the Goddess, the white-armed Hêrê, heard that suppliant moan,  
 Straightway she spake to Hephaistus, her well-belovèd son :

“Refrain thee, Hephaistus, my glorious child, for ill were it done  
 If still for a mortal's sake we should buffet a deathless one.” 380

So did she speak, and Hephaistus quenched that flame divine,  
 And again down the beautiful streams did the hurrying ripples shine.

Now so soon as the might of Xanthus was overmastered, these  
 Had rest, for in spite of her wrath did Hêrê grant him peace.

But amidst of the rest of the Gods was a bolt of contention dashed ; 385  
 And the winds of their passionate hearts in stormy battle clashed.  
 Loud was the crash of their onset : the earth roared underground,  
 And with thunder-clarion pealing the boundless heaven rang round.  
 And Zeus on Olympus enthroned heard all, and his heart within  
 Laughed he for glee, beholding the strife of the Gods begin. 390

Short time from the onset they shrank ; but rose the battle-clang  
When Arês the buckler-cleaver first on Athênê sprang  
Grasping his brazen spear, and loud his defiance rang :

“ Wherefore again, thou wasp, art thou stinging the Gods to the fight  
Thou tempest of recklessness, driven to mischief by measureless spite ? 395  
Hast thou forgotten who moved Diomedes, Tydeus' son,  
To stab me, who caught at his spear, and unswervingly guided it on  
Full against me, that it wounded my flesh in the sight of the sun ?  
Now therefore, I ween, shalt thou pay me the price of the deeds thou hast done.”

As he spake it, he smote on her Aegis, the terrible tasselled shield,— 400  
Not to the lightning of Zeus doth the adamant face of it yield,—  
Even there did Arês the blood-stained smite with his long-shadowed spear.  
But she drew back a step, and her strong hand caught up a stone lying near  
On the plain ; 'twas a rugged rock, a black and a mighty one,  
Set for a boundary-mark by the men of the days long gone. 405  
Therewithal did she smite fierce Arês' neck, and his knees she unstrung.  
Over seven roods' length he fell, and his hair in the dust was flung :  
Clashed round him his armour : and Pallas Athênê laughed at the sight,  
And there in triumphant scorn she sped the winged word-flight :

“ Fool !—and not yet hast thou learnt the measure of this my might, 410  
How far above thine is my strength, that thou darest me on to the fight ?  
This shall for thee be the fruit of the curses thy mother spake,  
Of her wrath and her purpose of evil to thee, who hast dared to forsake  
The Achaians, and make thee the arrogant Trojans' battle-stay.”

So spake she, and turned she her proud scorn-lightening eyes away. 415



But the daughter of Zeus, Aphroditê, led him thence by the hand,  
 Groaning and groaning again, scarce rallying life to stand.  
 And when Hêrê the white-armed Goddess that hero-warrior espied,  
 Forthright unto Pallas Athênê with words swift-winged she cried :

“ Ha ! child of the Aegis-bearer Zeus, O tireless of might, 420  
 Lo how again from the wasting war, through the clash of the fight,  
 Yon carrion-fly is leading the murderer !—Follow their flight ! ”

So spake she, and after them darted Athênê in triumph-glee,  
 And on Aphroditê's breast with her brawny hand smote she :  
 And there were her knees unstrung, and the strength of her heart was fled, 425  
 And there they twain on the breast of the boon earth lay as dead,  
 And there in triumphant scorn the winged words Pallas sped :

“ Even so be all that would lend unto Troy's folk battle-aid,  
 What time soever they fight with the Argives corslet-arrayed !  
 So valiant be they and so steadfast as she this day hath been, 430  
 Who hath braved my might, this champion of Arês, the Dalliance-queen.  
 Ha ! were it thus, long ago had we gotten us rest from toil,  
 And Ilium's fair-walled city had been our battle-spoil.”

So spake she, and Hêrê the Goddess, the White-armed, smiled as she heard,  
 The while to Apollo the Lord Earth-shaker spake the word : 435

“ Phoebus, why stand we apart ? It is nowise meet and right,  
 Since the rest have begun : foul shame will it be, if we shall not fight  
 Ere back to Olympus, the brass-paved palace of Zeus, we fare.  
 Begin thou ; for thou art the younger, and not for mine honour it were,  
 Seeing I am the elder-born, and in wisdom greater than thou. 440

O fool and witless of heart !—hast thou clean forgotten now  
All the affliction we suffered beside yon Ilian wall,  
We only of all the Gods, when we came from Zeus's hall,  
And were hirelings a whole year's space unto haughty Laomedon  
For a promised wage, and he was our taskmaster, speeding us on ; 445  
And I for the Trojans builded a wall about their town,  
Wide and exceeding fair ; no foe might break it down.

O Phoebus, and thou didst pasture their trailfoot wreath-horned herd  
Mid the folds of Ida the forest-shadowed, the many-spurred.  
But at last, when the seasons brought the time of our glad desire, 450  
The day of our toil-wage, then did he wrest from us all our hire,  
And with threats that terrible king Laomedon sent us away :  
Thine hands did he threaten to bind, thy feet in the fetters to lay,  
And to send thee away into thraldom to isles far over the brine ;  
Yea, swore he would shear with the brass our ears, even thine and mine. 455  
So we turned us aback and we went, and with rage were our hearts afire,  
Wroth for the promised guerdon, the broken troth of the liar.  
To his folk now art thou showing thy kindness !—not on our side  
Dost thou toil that the Trojans may perish, the lawless children of pride,  
In utterest wrack, yea, every child and shamefast bride.” 460

Then unto him Far-smiter Apollo the King replied :  
“ Earth-shaker, thou wouldst not say that my wisdom abode with me  
If I for the wretched deathlings' sake should war with thee,—  
Creatures that like to the leaves of the forest flourish to-day,  
And the life in them gloweth as flame, and the fruit of the earth eat they ; 465

And to-morrow, behold, they be fading and perishing. Nay, but with speed  
Refrain we from strife : let themselves in their own cause battle and bleed."

So spake he, and turned him away, for that shame withheld his hand  
From smiting his father's brother, the Shaker of the Land.

But his sister chode with him hotly, the chaser of forest-prey, 470  
Artemis, Greenwood-queen, and with mocking speech 'gan say :

"Thou art recreant, O Far-smiter, and all the triumph dost yield  
To Poseidon, and giv'st him the victory-vaunt of an unfought field !  
O fool, and what hast thou to do to bear the bow in vain ?

Ha, in the halls of our sire let me hear thee never again 475  
Making thy boast as of old mid the Gods that abide for aye,  
How that thou with Poseidon wilt match thee face to face in the fray !"

So railed she : no word unto her Far-smiter Apollo spoke :  
But the wrath of the Wife of Zeus, of the Lady of Worship, awoke ;  
And with words of upbraiding she cried to the Arrow-triumphant there : 480

"And thou, O shameless-bold, how is it that now thou dost dare  
Against me to array thee ? I ween I am all too strong for thee,  
What though thou bearest the bow, seeing Zeus hath ordained thee to be  
Unto women a lion, hath given thee to slay them as seemeth thee good.  
Ha, better it is on the mountains to slaughter the beasts of the wood 485  
And the flying stags, than in conflict to strive with a mightier foe !  
Nay then, an thou wilt, make trial of war, and so shalt thou know  
How mighty is she against whom thou art fain into battle to go."

So spake she, and Artemis' either hand by the wrist she gripped [stripped ;  
With her left ; with her right from her shoulders the bow and the quiver she

And with these did she buffet the ears of the Huntress, smiling ever,  
While Artemis twisted and writhed, and the swift shafts poured from the quiver.  
And weeping and cowed did she flee, as darteth a culver adread,  
Which in flight from the swoop of a hawk to her haven of safety hath sped,  
To a cleft of the rock, being doomed not yet for the spoiler's prey ; 495  
So weeping she fled, and she left the bow on the ground where it lay.  
Then unto Lêto the Guide-god, Slayer of Argus, said :

"Lêto, I fight not with thee : good sooth, he were hard bestead  
Who would buffet the brides of Zeus, the arrayer of hosts of cloud.  
Nay, nay, but amidst of the Deathless with lightsome heart and proud 500  
Boast thou that in stress of battle before thy might I bowed."

But silently Lêto upgathered the bow and the arrows that lay  
Hither and thither strewn in the dust of the whirl of the fray.  
Then bearing the quiver and bow she followed her daughter's flight :  
She was gone unto Zeus's brass-paved hall on Olympus' height ; 505  
And weeping she sat on her father's knees in sorrowful plight,  
While the vesture celestial shook with her sobs. But he gathered his child  
Close in his arms, and Kronion asked her, and kind he smiled :

"Now which of the Heaven-folk, darling, this unto thee hath done  
Roughly and rudely, as though thou hadst sinned in the sight of the sun ?" 510

Spake she of the garlanded hair, of the forest-ringing shout :  
"Father, thy wife, even Hêrê, hath dealt to me buffet and flout :  
Still mid the Deathless her brands of dissention she flingeth about."

So spake they each unto other, of deeds of outrage done.  
But Phoebus Apollo the while into Ilium the holy was gone ; 515



For his heart yearned over the wall of the beautiful-built town,  
 Lest the Danaans ere its hour should in that day break it down.  
 But the rest of the ever-abiding Gods to Olympus hied,  
 These wrathful at heart, and those in glory of triumph-pride.  
 With Zeus the Cloudrack-clad sat these : but still in the plain 520  
 By Achilles' hands were the heroes of Troy and her battle-steeds slain.  
 And as when storm-billows of smoke toss up to the broad-arched skies  
 From a burning town, when the wrath of the Gods hath bidden them rise,  
 And for this must all folk toil, and many a heart shall break ;  
 So Achilles brought on the Trojans travail and sore heart-ache. 525

From the height of a mighty tower the ancient King gazed out  
 At Achilles the terrible : ever before him the huddled rout  
 Of the panic-struck Trojans fled, nor was any deliverance found.  
 And the King with a bitter cry came down from the tower to the ground ;  
 And straight to the stalwart guards of the gates his behest he spoke : 530

“ Hold ye the gates flung wide in your hands, till the rout of the folk  
 Shall all have escaped to the city ; for now is Achilles drawn near  
 Driving them : ruin and wrack shall befall us, sorely I fear.  
 And when they again draw breath, safe-gathered within the wall,  
 Together again let the massy close-lapped gate-leaves fall, 535  
 Lest the swoop of yonder destroyer should dart through, ruining all.”

So he spake, and they thrust back the bolts, and wide the gates they flung.  
 So a light of safety shone through the pass. And forth hath sprung  
 Apollo, to meet Achilles, and shield the Trojans from bane.  
 On, on to the city, on to the high-built wall amain, 540

With throats thirst-harrowed, dust-besprent from the weary plain,  
Fled they, and he with the spear followed fiercely, and madness was burning  
Evermore in his heart, and for battle-fame's crown was the soul of him yearning.  
Then, then high-gated Troy had the sons of Achaia won,  
Had not Apollo enkindled Antênor's godlike son 545  
Agênor, a princely hero, and mighty and valiant of mood.  
Into his heart did he breathe battle-might : by his side he stood  
In his godhead, to ward death's overmastering doom from his head,  
Leaning against an oak, but with thick mist round him shed.  
When the hero espied Achilles the city-smiter fell, 550  
He stayed, and with surging thoughts did his heart full darkly swell,  
The while to his valiant spirit disquieted sore spake he :  
    " Ah me !—if now from the face of Achilles the mighty I flee  
By the selfsame way whereby my fellows in panic fly,  
Even so shall he overtake me, the dastard's death shall I die. 555  
But and if I shall leave yon fleers to huddle in clamorous rout  
From Achilles Peleus' son, and shall turn my feet about  
Fleeing far from the wall to the Ilian plain, till at last I shall win  
Unto Ida's spurs, and shall enter her sheltering brakes within,  
Then in the river's flow might I bathe me at evenfall, 560  
And return cool-cleansed from the battle-sweat unto Ilium's wall :—  
Nay, wherefore communeth mine heart within me thus in vain ?  
I doubt he will mark me as outward I swerve from the town to the plain.  
After me straight will he dart, and o'ertake with his flying feet. [565  
No hope for me then : but the death and the blackness of doom must I meet ;

For beyond all menfolk stalwart he is and passing fleet.

Ha!—what if in front of the city I meet him—brave him here!—

Yea, surely his flesh is but flesh, to be pierced by the point of the spear!

There is in him but one life only, and mortal he is, men say ;

And the son of Kronos giveth him this renown in the fray." 570

Then he gathered his strength, and awaited Achilles : his heart of might

Swelled high with the battle-spirit to meet his foe and to fight.

As cometh a leopardess forth of her twilight lair in the brake

To meet the hunter, and nowise within her her heart doth quake,

Nor in any wise quail, when she heareth the bay of the hounds drawn near ; 575

For though, ere she leap, ye shall stab her, or smite with the cast of a spear,

Yet even when spiked on the shaft she will not refrain her from fight,

Mad-struggling, or ever she grapple her foe, or be slain outright ;

So princely Antenor's son, Agenor the godlike, stood,

To make proof of the might of Achilles, and fled not, dauntless of mood. 580

But in front of his breast the fence of his shapely shield did he hold :

At the hero he aimed his lance, and his voice rang loud and bold :

" Ha ! didst thou hope in thine heart, O Achilles, king of renown,

This day to bring down to the dust the lordly Trojans' town ?

Ah fool ! pains many and sore shall be suffered for her ere then, 585

For heroes therein there be many, and battle-valiant men.

For our fathers' and mothers' sake, for our wives and our babes, will we save

Fair Ilium : thou, even thou, shalt win thee here but a grave,

For all thy terrible prowess, O warrior stalwart and brave !"

Then from his brawny hand the dart keen-pointed he shot, 590

And it smote Achilles beneath the knee, and missed him not.  
And around his ankle the greave of the tin fresh-smithied rang  
Terribly : backward the spear from the smitten armour sprang ;  
For the god-given war-gear stayed the point, that it won not through.  
Thereafter Peleus' son on Agênor the godlike flew ; 595  
But Apollo suffered him not with glory to crown that fight,  
For he snatched Agênor away, and in thick mist veiled him from sight ;  
And he sent him in peace safe home, plucked forth of the peril of war,  
And by guile drew Peleus' son from the hunted people afar.  
For there in the shape of Agênor before Achilles' face 600  
Far-smiter stood, and the hero with swift feet rushed in chase.  
Over the plain wheat-waving the God fled fast from the man ;  
By Xanthus the silver-eddyng swerving aside they ran ;  
And scanty outrunning him ever Apollo beguiled him on,  
That aye he might hope by the speed of his feet that prey to have won ; 605  
The while the rest of the Trojan rout with exceeding joy  
Pressed into the city in panic, and thronged were the streets of Troy.  
Ha, but they had no will without the wall to abide,  
And to tarry their fellows' coming, and know who among them had died,  
And who had escaped from the war, but glad, O glad they poured 610  
Into the town, whosoever was saved by his feet from the sword.



## BOOK XXII.

*Of the blood of Patroclus avenged, and Hector slain by Achilles.*

**S**O these up and down through the city, as fawns in panic quaking,  
Were cooling the sweat on their brows, and the fire of their thirst were they  
On the fair-built battlements leaning : but on the Achaians pressed [slaking,  
Ever nigher the wall, and their shields on their shoulders the while did they rest.  
But there were the feet of Hector fettered by baleful fate 5  
In front of Ilium to tarry before the Skaian gate.

But Phoebus Apollo spake to Achilles Peleus' seed :

“Wherefore with swift feet, Peleus' son, after me dost thou speed,  
Who art mortal, and I an Immortal?—Ha, nowise thou knewest ere now  
How that I am a God, but with tireless feet on stormest thou ! 10  
What, carest thou naught for the Trojans' toil, whom thou putttest in fear?  
Lo, now in the town are they gathered : thou turnest aside and art here !  
Me shalt thou never slay ; not subject to death am I.”

Then sorely disquieted fleetfoot Achilles made reply :

“Thou hast thwarted me, Smiter from Far, above all Gods worker of ill, 15

From the wall who hast hitherward turned me, else many another still  
Had gnashed his teeth in the dust ere they won unto Ilium again !  
Thou hast reft great glory from me, and my foes hast delivered from bane  
With a light heart :—vengeance to come was there none to cause thee to quail.  
I would surely avenge me on thee, if my strength for the deed might avail !” 20

He spake, and with heart uplifted he turned him aback to the town,  
Rushing on as a horse in a chariot, a winner of guerdon-renown,  
When he runneth full lightly, and straineth away and away o’er the plain ;  
So lithe were his feet and his knees, as Achilles plied them amain.

And him did the old man Priam the first with his eyes espy, 25  
O’er the plain as he rushed far-flashing, as gleameth the star from the sky,  
The star of the latter summer, whose beams exceeding bright  
Appear mid the host of heaven in the hush of the dead of night,  
Which men have surnamed with a name, and the Hound of Orion they call :  
Brightest it is, but a sign and a token of evil withal, 30  
For a bearer it is of fever to many a hapless man :

Even so did the brass on the breast of Achilles flash as he ran.  
And the old man wailed, and he smote on his head, uplifting on high  
His hands, and he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry,  
Beseeching his dear-loved son : but in front of the gate he stood 35  
Eager to fight with Achilles, and all unshaken of mood.

And the old man stretching his hands unto him made pitiful moan :

“O Hector, my son, my beloved, abide this man not alone  
With none other to help thee, lest on a sudden doom thou light  
Overborne by Peleides, for greater by far than thine is his might,— 40

That ruthless man!—oh would that as dear to the Gods he were  
 As to me!—his body full soon should the hounds and the vultures tear  
 As he lay: then forth of mine heart should its terrible anguish flee!—  
 The man who of sons full many and brave hath bereaved me,  
 Slaying and selling to thralldom in isles far over the sea. 45  
 Yea, now two sons, Lykaon and Polydorus withal,  
 I cannot discern mid the Trojans that throng within Ilium's wall:  
 Laothoë bare them to me: among women a princess she is.  
 But if yet mid the host of the foemen they live, ah then, I wis,  
 Redeem them will we with the brass and the gold in mine halls that is found, 50  
 For that much to his daughter was given of Altes the ancient renowned.  
 But and if by this they be dead, and have passed unto Hades' hall,  
 Upon me and the mother who bare them shall trouble and anguish fall;  
 But lighter shall lie on the rest of the people their burden of woe  
 If thou too perish not by Achilles' hands laid low. 55  
 Nay, pass thou within the wall, dear child, and save thereby  
 The Trojans and daughters of Troy, and glory great and high  
 Give not to Peleides, nor thou of the precious life be bereft.  
 And compassionate wretched me, who yet have feeling left,  
 The hapless, whom Father Kronion shall slay on the threshold of eld 60  
 By an evil fate, when mine eyes full many an ill have beheld,  
 Have beheld sons butchered, and daughters dragged unto shame and thrall,  
 And my chambers havoc-wasted, and helpless babes withal  
 Uplifted and dashed to the ground in the ghastly sport of the fray,  
 And the wives of my sons by Achaian ravishers haled away. 65

And me, even me, at the entering in of my doors at the last  
Raw-ravering dogs shall rend—when a foeman with javelin-cast  
Or with stab of the keen-whetted brass my life from my limbs shall have sped,—  
Those trencher-hounds, door-warders that I in mine own halls fed ;  
Drunk with my blood, yea, maddened therewith, in the porch of my gate 70  
Shall they lay them down. For the young man seemly is every fate,  
Battle-stricken, with keen brass mangled and torn, to lie :—  
Whatsoever befall, there is honour, for so do the heroes die.  
But ah, when the hoary head and the white beard's reverend hair  
And the shame of the old man slaughtered the dogs defile and tear, 75  
Most piteous is this of all that wretched mortals bear.”

The old man spake, and his hoary hair he plucked and rent  
From his head with his hands, yet would not Hector's purpose be bent.  
And his mother wept the while and lamented sore distressed,  
And she loosened the folds of her vesture, she bared the mother's breast, 80  
And with shedding of tears the swift-winged words to her son she addressed :

“O Hector, my child, have respect unto this, and have mercy on me,  
Even me ; if ever I gave consolation of this unto thee,  
Remember it, O my son, my darling, and fight yon foe  
From within the wall, nor without for a champion stand thou so ! 85  
He is ruthless ; for if he shall slay thee, I never shall lay on a bed  
The blossom that sprang from my womb, nor lament my beloved dead,  
Nor thy wife of the rich bride-price : but from us O far away  
By the ships of the Argives the fleetfoot dogs shall devour the prey.”

So to their dear-loved son with weeping and wailing they cried, 90



And with earnest beseeching ; yet turned not Hector's purpose aside.  
 But he waited Achilles the mighty as nearer and nearer he sped,  
 As a mountain-snake by his den abideth the wayfarer's tread,  
 Which hath eaten of deadly herbs ; dread fury hath passed into him,  
 And coiled round the pit of his den he is glaring exceeding grim : 95  
 So Hector with quenchless fury filled would in no wise yield ;  
 And against a tower forth-jutting he leaned his glittering shield.  
 But in sore disquiet he spake to his spirit gallant-souled :

“ Ah me, if I enter the gates and the walls of the fenced hold,  
 First will Polydamas be to heap reproach on me then, 100  
 Who bade me backward to lead to the city the Trojan men  
 When fell that ruinous night when Achilles uprose to the war.  
 But I would not hearken nor heed ;—ay, this had been better far !  
 But now, forasmuch as my folly hath ruined the host, I fear  
 Troy's sons and her scornful daughters royally-robed, and the jeer, 105  
 Lest haply a worser than I shall say with mocking sneer :  
 ‘ Hector by trust in his own might brought the people to bane !’  
 So shall they say : but for me, it were more, far more for my gain  
 To face Achilles, and turn not again till I smite him down,  
 Or in front of the town by his hand with honour to die and renown. 110  
 —But what if my buckler boss-bestarred I should lay down here,  
 And my massy helmet, and lean against yon wall my spear,  
 And myself should go and stand the princely Achilles before,  
 And should promise to him that Helen and all that treasure-store,  
 What things soe'er Alexander in hollow ships oversea 115

Brought unto Troy, wherefrom this strife began to be,  
I would render to Atreus' sons to bear away, and beside  
Would give the Achaians the half of the wealth this city doth hide,  
And would take an oath of the Trojans, and cause the elders to swear  
To hide back nothing thereof, but to make division fair 120  
Of all the warded wealth in the city glorious?

—Tush! wherefore now is mine heart within me communing thus?  
I go to meet him!—Achilles will nowise pity nor spare;  
He will have not any respect, but will slay me fenceless there:  
Like a woman shall I be slain, of my war-gear disarrayed. 125  
No time is it now from beneath a rock or an oak-tree's shade  
To speak soft words unto him, as of maiden and youth it is done  
When maiden and youth together softly murmur alone.  
Better to clash in the strife. Let us speedily see and know  
Upon whether of us the Olympian glory's meed will bestow." 130

So mused he, and tarried: but nearer Achilles and nearer pressed,  
Like the Warrior-god Enyalios, Lord of the tossing crest,  
Brandishing over his rightward shoulder the Pelian ash,  
Terrible: round him the brazen armour gleamed, as the flash  
Of fire when its flame rusheth up, or the sun springing up from the sea. 135  
And trembling on Hector gat hold when he saw: no more dared he  
There to abide, but the gates he forsook, and he fled in his fear,  
And Peleides in pride of his fleetness of foot rushed after the flier.  
Even as a hawk on the mountains, the swiftest of all winged things,  
On a trembling hare cometh swooping adown with effortless wings, 140

And she fleeth before him, but he with a wild scream following still  
 Darteth to seize her, and darteth again with eager will :  
 So in his fury he flew right onward, and Hector fled  
 'Neath the wall of the Trojans, and strained strong knees that lightly sped.  
 On, by the watch-height—on, by the wild-fig tossed with the wind,— 145  
 By the wain-track they darted, leaving the wall ever farther behind.  
 And they came to the beautiful-flowing springs where the ripples gleam  
 As the fountains twain well up of Skamander's swirling stream.  
 For with warm flood floweth the one, and around it upgoeth a smoke  
 Therefrom, as though it were blazing fire from the earth that broke. 150  
 And the other in summer's heat as cold hail gusheth forth,  
 Or as snow, or as ice of the water begotten by winds of the north.  
 And beside them cisterns broad fair-fashioned of stone are there,  
 Full nigh, whither wives of the Trojan men and their daughters fair  
 Were wont to bring their glistering raiment and cleanse the same 155  
 In the olden days of peace, ere the sons of Achaia came.  
 Thereby those twain, this fleeing, and that pursuing, raced :  
 'Twas a brave man fled before, but a mightier far who chased  
 Swiftly ; for not for an ox they contended, no hide was the meed,—  
 Such things as be set for guerdons when men in the footrace speed,— 160  
 But they raced for the life of Hector the queller of the steed.  
 And as thunderfoot horses, the winners of guerdons, with feet fast-flying  
 Dash round the turning-post, and there is the great prize lying,  
 A tripod or woman-thrall, when dead is a mighty man ;  
 So compassing thrice the city of Priam the heroes ran 165

With hurrying feet : and all the Gods looked on from the sky.  
And now did the Father of Gods and of men in the midst of them cry :

“ Out on it !—dear unto me is the man that I see with mine eyes  
Hunted around yon wall, and ruth in mine heart doth arise  
For Hector, who burnt to me sacrifice-thighs, ay, many an one, 170  
Now on the crests of Ida of many a fold, and anon  
On the citadel's height : even him Achilles the godlike at last  
Is hunting around the city of Priam with feet flying fast.  
But come now, bethink you, ye Gods, take counsel together for this :  
Or shall we redeem his life from destruction, or, brave as he is, 175  
In death shall we bow him beneath Achilles Pelcus' seed ?”

Unto him made answer Athênê, the Grey-eyed uttered her rede :  
“ O Father of gleaming levin and dark cloud, what sayest thou ?  
A man that is mortal, whose weird hath been spoken long ere now,  
For him wouldst thou loose the bands of death dread-echoing ? 180  
Ay, work thy will—but the Gods shall nowise praise this thing !”

But answer to her did Zeus the Cloudrack-gatherer make :  
“ Fear not, O Trito-begotten, belovèd child : I spake  
Nowise with purpose of heart, but of grace unto thee am I fain.  
As thy spirit hath moved thee, so shalt thou do, and thou shalt not refrain.” 185

Enkindled the more by his word was Athênê the eager-hearted :  
She flashed from the crests of Olympus, and down to the earth she darted.

Swift-chasing Hector amain Achilles followed his flight ;  
As a hound which hath roused from its covert a fawn on a mountain-height  
Chaseth the child of the stag through many a glade and glen ; 190



And though it should cower 'neath a bush, and a moment escape his ken,  
Yet unresting he runneth, and scenteth it out, till he light thereon :  
So nevé might Hector baffle Peleus' fleetfoot son ;  
But oft as over against the gates Dardanian  
He would suddenly swerve to dart 'neath the stately towers as he ran, 195  
If haply his friends from above with their darts would succour his plight,  
So often Achilles would head him, and backward turn him in flight  
To the plain, for himself on the cityward side flew on evermore.  
And as one in a dream can ne'er overtake him who fleeth before,  
As this one can never escape, neither that draw nigh to the floor, 200  
So never could this with his feet overtake, neither that win clear.  
And how had Hector escaped so long from death's grim doom,  
Except for the last and the uttermost time Apollo had come  
To his side, and enkindled his might, making lightsome his knees as they sped ?  
But unto his war-folk ever Achilles shook his head, 205  
And forbade them to hurl their bitter darts, lest another should win  
The glory of Hector's death, and himself be but second therein.  
But when for the fourth time these to the fountains twain drew nigh,  
Then hung Allfather his golden Balances forth from the sky :  
Two fates of Death the outstretcher in sleep thereinto he flung, 210  
Whereon the lives of Achilles and Hector the horse-queller hung.  
By the midst did he grasp them and raise—sank Hector's doom-fraught day  
Down, down unto Hades, and Phoebus passed from his side away.  
Then came to Peleides the Goddess Athênè the flashing-eyed ;  
Beside him she stood, and she loosed the winged word-flight, and she cried : 215

"O glorious Achilles the Zeus-beloved, we twain this day  
To the galleys shall bear, I trust, high fame for Achaia's array  
By laying yon Hector low, be he never so hungry for fight.  
No more unto him is it given to escape from our hands by flight,  
Not though in an agony Phoebus the Smiter from Far should entreat, 220  
Though he grovelled at Father Zeus the Aegis-bearer's feet.  
But thou stand still and awhile draw breath, and for me, I will go  
And persuade yon craven man against man to abide his foe."

So spake Athênê, and hearkened Achilles, and blithe of mood  
He halted, and leaned on his brazen-pointed spear as he stood. 225  
And the Goddess left him there, and to Hector the godlike she came ;  
But it seemed Dêiphobus' shape, and the mighty voice was the same.  
And lo, at his side she stood, and the light-winged word spake she :

"Dear brother, Achilles the swift of a truth doeth violence to thee,  
Hunting thee round the city of Priam with fast-flying feet. 230  
Nay then, let us stand, and his onset abide, and in battle meet."

Answered her Hector, and spake the lord of the stormy crest :  
"Dêiphobus, ever in days overpast I loved thee best  
Of all my brethren, the children whom Priam and Hekabê bore :  
But now in my soul, I ween, shall I honour thee even more, 235  
Thee, who hast dared for my sake, when thou saw'st with thine eyes, to my side  
To come forth of the wall, the while all else safe-sheltered abide."

Unto him made answer Athênê, and spake the Flashing-eyed :  
"Dear brother, low at my knees did my father and mother fall,  
And one after other besought me, yea, and my comrades withal, 240

Here to abide, so greatly before Achilles they quake.

But mine heart within me was sore with a grievous pain for thy sake.

Now let us have at him, now let us battle : no sparing of spears

Let there be, to the end we may know whether haply Achilles the fierce

Shall slay us twain, and shall bear our blood-stained battle-gear 245

Unto his hollow ships, or shall fall smitten down by thy spear."

So spake Athênê, and deathward she drew him by subtlety.

So when, as against each other they strode, they were drawn full nigh,

Then first to his foe great Hector the stormy-crested said :

"No longer, O Peleus' son, will I flee thee, as erst I fled 250

Round the mighty city of Priam thrice, nor endured against thee

To stand as thou camest, but now hath my spirit enkindled me

To abide thee, man against man, to be slain or haply to slay.

Yet come, let us swear by the Gods, for none more righteous than they

Shall be found for our witnesses and our warders of covenant : 255

For to thee will I do no foul despite, if Zeus shall grant

That my strength outlast thy strength, and I take thy life away.

But when I have stripped from thy shoulders, Achilles, thy war-array,

Thy corse will I yield to the men of Achaia. And so do thou."

But Achilles the fleetfoot cried unto him with lowering brow : 260

"Hector, thou madman, prate not to me of a covenant-troth!

As between fierce lions and men there is found no assurance of oath,

And as wolves and lambs a spirit of harmony never shall find,

But evil against each other for aye are the thoughts of their mind,

So friendship is nowise for thee and for me, nor betwixt us twain 265

Shall be plighting of oaths, or ever the one or the other slain  
Glut Arês the Warrior, the stubborn-shielded, with life-blood enow.  
Bethink thee of all thy prowess!—bitter need hast thou  
To prove thee a cunning spearman, a warrior unblenching in fight.  
Escape is there none for thee now, but Pallas Athênê forthright 270  
Shall subdue thee beneath my spear, and the whole debt now shalt thou pay  
Of the woes of my friends, whom thou with thy raging lance didst slay.”

He spake, and he swung up on high, and he hurled it, the long-shadowed lance,  
Yet Hector avoided its leap, looking forward with keen swift glance :  
For he crouched low, watching :—the brazen spear o’er the head of him flew, 275  
And it plunged in the earth ; but Pallas Athênê the shaft forth drew  
And gave to Achilles, unmarked of Hector the shepherd of folk.

Then to the princely child of Peleus Hector spoke :  
“ Thou hast missed me !—so then not yet did Achilles the godlike know  
From Zeus the doom of Hector ! Ha, but thy thought was so ! 280  
Nay, a deceiver in speech is here, and a glib-tongued wight,  
To cause me to quail at thy face, and forget my fury and might.  
Ha, not as I flee shalt thou thrust through the midst of my back the dart,  
But as onward I charge do thou drive it clear through my breast and my heart,  
If God hath vouchsafed to thee this. Now then shun thou the brass 285  
Of my spear :—and oh that its whole length into thy flesh might pass !  
More light for the Trojans then were the burden of war, I trow,  
If thou wert cut off from the earth, for the heaviest curse art thou.” [shot,

He spake, and the long-shadowed lance high-swung from his hand hath he  
And it smote in the midst of Peleides’ shield, and it missed him not. 290



But the spear glanced far from the buckler, and Hector chafed in wrath  
To see how his keen lance fled from his hand on a bootless path.  
Confounded he stood, for he had no ashen spear beside.

Then to Dêiphobus, prince of the white shield, loud he cried :

“ Ho, give me a long spear yet ! ”—but lo, he was nowhere nigh. 295

Then Hector’s soul knew all, and he spake full bitterly :

“ Ah me, of a truth the Gods have summoned me deathward to fare !

I weened that the hero Dêiphobus stood beside me there :

But he is within the wall ; ’twas Athênê that mocked my despair !

Now, nigh to me now is an evil death, nor afar it is : 300

Escape there is none,—ah, sure from of old the pleasure was this

Of Zeus and the Zeus-born Smiter from Far, who in days overpast

Of their good will saved me ; but doom hath lighted upon me at last.

Yet let me not tamely perish, nor die in renownless shame

Till a deed shall be wrought whereof the unborn shall hear the fame.” 305

Swift, as he spake, from the scabbard his keen-whetted sword flashed out,

Which hung below his side, his falchion massy and stout ;

And he gathered his might, and like to a soaring eagle he swooped,

Which adown from the clouds dark-lowering unto the plain hath stooped

With purpose to pounce on a tender lamb, or a cowering hare ; 310

So Hector swooped as he brandished on high his sword made bare.

But onward with fierce rage filling his soul did Achilles charge,

And he cast in front of his breast the fence of his goodly targe

Curious-wrought, and a wild light danced on his helm bright-gleaming

With its fourfold crest, and around were the golden hairs wide-streaming, 315

Fair threads, which Hephaistus had shed full thickly about the plume.  
As amidst of the stars forth goeth a star in the night's deep gloom,  
Hesperus, loveliest star that paceth the floor of the sky,  
So glittered the point of his keen-whetted spear, which Achilles on high  
In his right hand shook, upon Hector the godlike to wreak his wrath, 320  
Keen-watching for glimpse of his flesh, where the lance might find a path.  
But his body in brazen harness of proof was sheathed all o'er,  
Fair mail, which himself from the body of slain Patroclus tore.  
Yet a moment appeared the throat, where the sundering collar-bones lie  
'Twixt shoulder and neck : there is swiftest doom for the life thereby. 325  
Even there in his mid-rush godlike Achilles smote with his spear,  
And on through the smooth of his neck the point of the lance cleft sheer.  
Yet was not the windpipe pierced by the ashwood heavy with brass,  
That yet he might speak, and the answering word through his lips might pass.  
Down fell he in dust, and Achilles the godlike taunting cried : 330  
    " Hector, and didst thou think, in the hour when Patroclus died,  
To be safe?—and thou gavest no thought unto me who was not by his side!  
Thou fool!—aloof the while was a mightier far than he,  
Even I : by the hollow ships his avenger remained for thee,  
Who have palsied thy knees : now dogs and vultures shall shamefully rend 335  
Thee, but Achaia's host shall with glory entomb my friend."  
Then faintly and feebly Hector the stormy-crested spake :  
" By thy life and thy knees I entreat thee, I pray for thy parents' sake,  
Cast me not forth by the ships for Achaian dogs to devour,  
But accept thou the brass and the gold, the abundant ransom-shower 340

Of the gifts that my sire and my mother the Queen at thy feet shall cast,  
And yield thou my corse to be homeward borne, that so at the last  
Trojans and daughters of Troy may pay me the dues of the pyre."

But Achilles the fleetfoot spake, and his eyes were a lurid fire :

"Knee me no knees, thou dog, neither prate of my parents to me ! 345

Would God my spirit within me would leave my fury free

To carve the flesh of thee raw, and devour, for the deeds thou hast done !

There is none shall deliver thine head from the teeth of the dogs, there is none,

Not though they brought hither and told the ransom ten times o'er,

Yea, though it were twenty-fold, and though they should promise yet more, 350

Though Priam Dardanus' son against thy corse bade weigh

Gold in the balance—not then should the lady thy mother lay

Her dead on the bier, and make lamentation for him that she bare ;

Nay, but the vultures and dogs thine every limb shall tear."

And Hector the stormy-crested dying answer made : 355

"Yea, as thou art I behold thee : I was not like to persuade

Such as thee, for surely of steel the heart in thy breast is wrought.

—Take heed lest I rise up against thee, the God's wrath kindled hot,

In the day wherein Paris and Phoebus Apollo with death shall smite

At the entering in of the Skaian gate even thee in thy might." 360

As fainted the word on his lips was death's veil over him spread,

And the soul from the limbs forth fleeting adown unto Hades had fled,

Moaning her ruin, forsaking her youth and her goodlihead.

But to him, yea, dead as he lay, Achilles the godlike said :

"Die thou :—but my doom will I then receive, when the pleasure it is 365

Of Zeus and the rest of the deathless Gods to accomplish this."

So spake he, and forth of the corpse he drew the brazen spear,  
And he set it aside, and he stripped from his shoulders the battle-gear  
Blood-stained : and running around did the other Achaians press,  
And with wonder they gazed on the stature and marvellous comeliness 370  
Of Hector : was none but dealt him a stab as he stood thereby ;  
And thus, as he glanced at his neighbour, did this man and that man cry :

" Ha ha, sooth, softer is Hector now to be touched with the hand  
Then when on the ships he was hurling the red consuming brand !"

So cried they, and this one and that drew nigh, and they stabbed the slain. 375  
But when fleetfoot Achilles the godlike the mail from his body had ta'en,  
Amidst the Achaians standing he spake the swift-winged words :

" O friends, ye chiefs of the Argive men, and battle-lords,  
Seeing the Gods have vouchsafed me to bring this man unto naught  
Who hath done much evil, above what all the rest have wrought, 380  
Come, make we assay in our harness, and compass the city around,  
To know of the mind of the Trojans, the purpose their hearts have found,  
Whether now they will leave their stronghold, since he to the dust is brought,  
Or be stedfastly minded to tarry, albeit Hector is not.

Yet wherefore now is my spirit communing within me so ? 385  
Beside the galleys unburied and unbewailed lieth low

Patroclus : but him will I never forget from mine heart, so long  
As amidst of the living I fare, and my limbs for my need be strong.  
Yea, and if even the dwellers in Hades their dead forget,  
Even there my friend, my beloved, will I remember yet. 390



But now, O sons of Achaia, the victory-hymn let us sing,  
And return to the hollow ships, and this corse thitherward bring.  
We have won high glory, have stricken Hector the godlike down,  
Unto whom, as a God, the Troyfolk prayed throughout their town !"

He spake, and a shameful handling devised he for Hector slain ; 395  
For behind each foot did he sunder therefrom the sinews twain  
From the ankle-joint to the heel : hide-bands through the gashes he thrust ;  
To his chariot he bound them, and left the head to trail in the dust.  
He hath mounted his car, and the glorious armour thereon hath he cast,  
And he lashed the horses, and they with eager speed flew fast. 400  
And a dust from the haling of Hector arose, and tossed wide-spread  
His dark locks : wholly in dust his head lay low—that head  
Once comely : ah then was the hero delivered over of Zeus  
In his very fatherland for his foes to spitefully use.

So dust-besprent was his head ; but his mother was rending her hair 405  
The while, and she flung therefrom her head-veil glistening-fair  
Afar, and with wild loud shriek as she looked on her son she cried ;  
And in piteous wise did his father wail, and on every side  
Through the city the folk brake forth into shriek and wail at the sight.  
It was like unto this above all things, as though, from her topmost height 410  
To the ground, all beetling Troy in flame and in smoke were rolled.  
And scarce could the folk in his frenzy the ancient King withhold  
From rushing forth the Dardanian gates in his wild desire :  
And he prayed unto all, the while he rolled himself in the mire,  
Naming them all by their names, and calling on every one : 415

“Forbear, my friends, and for all your anguish leave me alone  
Forth of the city to fare to the ships of Achaia’s array.  
Unto him, yon fiend, yon worker of violent deeds, let me pray.  
In the sight of his fellows perchance he will blush, with compassion will see  
Grey hairs—he too hath a father, an old man like unto me, 420  
Even Peleus, the sire that begat him, and reared him up for a bane  
Unto Troy: but on me above all hath he laid the bitterest pain,  
So many my sons in manhood’s bloom hath his hand laid low.  
Yet not so much for the rest do I grieve, for all my woe,  
As for one for whom sharp anguish shall bow unto Hades mine head, 425  
Even Hector—would God from between mine arms he had passed to the dead!  
Then had we taken our fill of the moan and the keening cry,  
His mother, the hapless woman who bare him to this, and I.”

So spake he weeping; the people echoed him groan for groan.  
Then Hekabê raised to the daughters of Troy her frenzied moan: 430

“My child, what is life unto me with horrors stricken sore  
Now thou art dead?—Unto me both night and day evermore  
A boasting thou wast in the city, a blessing to all that abode  
In the burg, where the sons and the daughters of Troy hailed thee as a God;  
For surely a glory exceeding great to thy people wast thou 435  
While yet thou livest; but death and doom have o’ertaken thee now.”

So weeping she spake: howbeit not yet had his wife heard aught  
Of Hector; for tidings to her had no sure messenger brought  
How that her husband was tarrying yet without the wall:  
But a web she wove in an inner room of her stately hall, 440

Twofold, of crimson, and broidery-flowers therecover she laid.  
And she called to her fair-tressed maidens throughout the palace, and bade  
To set on the fire a mighty tripod, that so should be dight  
For Hector the steaming bath what time he returned from the fight.  
Ah fool! for she knew not that very far from the bath he had died 445  
'Neath Achilles' hands by the might of Athênê the flashing-eyed.  
Then heard she a shriek from a tower, a wild and woeful sound ;  
Then reeled her limbs, and the shuttle fell from her hands to the ground.  
Then turned she again to her handmaids beautiful-tressed, and she cried :  
    " Hitherward, follow me twain : let me see what deeds betide. 450  
The voice of mine husband's reverend mother I hear, and in me  
The heart in my breast is leaping up to my lips : each knee  
Is numbed. Unto Priam's children some evil is surely near!—  
Ah far from mine ears be the word!—but sorely, sorely I fear  
Lest haply Achilles the godlike have cut off Hector alone 455  
From the city, and now to the plain is chasing that valiant one,  
Yea, and hath made him to cease from the desperate hardihood  
Which possessed him : for never mid press of the warriors shrinking he stood,  
But he charged before all, for he yielded to none in his valorous mood."  
So spake she, and forth of the chamber as one distraught she fled, 460  
With heart fast beating the while ; and her handmaids beside her sped.  
But when to the tower she came and the gathered throng of men,  
Wild-staring she stood on the wall : and then—she espied him then  
Dragged onward in front of the city : the swift steeds' pitiless feet  
Were haling him on to the hollow ships of Achaia's fleet. 465

Then blackness of darkness veiled from her swimming eyes the day ;  
Backward reeling she fell, and she gasped her spirit away.  
And tossed afar from her head did the glistening bands of it fall,  
The frontlet thereof, and the net, and the plaited coronal,  
And the veil that Aphroditê the Golden gave in the hour 470  
When Hector the stormy-crested led his bride from her bower  
In Eëtion's halls, when he gave bride-gifts, a countless store.  
And her husband's sisters and brothers' wives thronged round, and bore  
Up in their arms that hapless one distraught unto death,  
Till her spirit came back to her breast, and shivered again her breath. 475  
Then wailing with broken sobs mid the daughters of Troy did she cry :  
    " O Hector, woe is me !—unto one fate thou and I .  
Were born ; in the palace of Priam thou, in wide Troy-town,  
And in Thêbê I, 'neath the shadow of Plakos' forest-crown,  
In Eëtion's home, who fostered his babe to a fearful lot— 480  
Ill-fated sire !—would God that sire had begotten me not !  
And thou unto Hades' homes 'neath earth's dark places must go,  
And me in thy palace-halls art thou leaving in bitter woe,  
A widow : and still but a child, yea, a very babe, is thy son,  
Which of thee and of me, the hapless, was born : to thy little one 485  
Thou shalt ne'er be a joy, O Hector, nor he unto thee : thou art gone !  
For though from the dolorous war of Achaia scatheless he flee,  
Evermore shall his portion be labour and sorrow in days to be.  
For the lands of his heritage shall strangers take away ;  
And mateless and lonely a child is made by the orphaning day. 490



Utterly droopeth his head, and with tears do his cheeks aye flow.  
And the child to his father's companions in hunger and want shall go,  
Plucking at one by his tunic, and one by his mantle's fold ;  
And in pity the man to his lips the cup but a moment shall hold,  
That it wetteth his lips, but the roof of his mouth is unmoistened and dry. 495  
And a lad unorphaned shall thrust him aback from the feast, and cry,  
With smiting of cruel hands and with stab of the pitiless jeer :  
' Begone ! no father of thine sitteth feasting amidst of us here !'  
And weeping the child shall return to his mother, to widowed me—  
Astyanax, who once, enthroned on his father's knee, 500  
On naught save the marrow and fatness of sheep was wont to feast :  
And when slumber enfolded him round, and from childish play he ceased,  
On a bed was he wont to sleep, in the arms of his nurse soft-stilled  
On an easeful couch, when with royal dainties his heart was filled.  
But now, of his father bereft, full many an ill shall he have— 505  
My Astyanax—that name unto him 'twas the Trojans gave ;  
For their gates and their far-stretching walls thou only wast wont to save.  
But now by the hollow ships, from thy parents far away,  
Shall the coiling worms devour, when filled are the dogs with the prey,  
A naked corse—ah yet in thine halls lieth raiment of thine, 510  
Fair-fashioned of women's fingers, daintily woven fine.  
But verily all these things will I burn with devouring fire :—  
O yea, no profit to thee—they shall not swathe thee on the pyre ;  
But to be for thine honour in Troytown's sons' and daughters' eyes."  
So wailed she and wept she, while moaned the women's answering cries.

## BOOK XXIII.

*Of the athlete-strife at the funeral-feast of the dead Patroclus.*

**S**O made they moan through the city, the while Achaia's host  
Back to the galleys streamed and the Hellespontine coast.  
Then scattered their thousands, and each to his galley wended his way.  
But Achilles suffered the Myrmidons not to break their array ;  
But his voice o'er the ranks of his battle-revelling comrades rolled : 5  
    " Swift-horsed Myrmidon men, my comrades staunch and bold,  
Not yet from the chariot-yoke let our thunderfoot steeds be led,  
But, warrior, horses, and car, let us all draw nigh to the dead,  
And wail for Patroclus : the honour is this of the dead which have died.  
But so soon as with sore lamentation our souls shall be satisfied, 10  
Let us all unyoke, and prepare us the meat of the eventide."  
Then, of Achilles begun, did the wail from the multitude rise.  
And around that body the fair-maned horses drave they thrice  
Mourning, and Thetis thrilled them with longing for weeping and wail.  
And wet were the sands at their feet, and wet was the warriors' mail 15

With tears ; so sorely they yearned for the panic-wafting chief.  
 And Peleides upraised the keen, and the vehement voice of grief,  
 The while on Patroclus' breast his manslaying hands he laid :

“ I hail thee, Patroclus, albeit in Hades' halls of shade !

Whatso I promised to thee, in nothing thereof have I failed. 20  
 For the dogs' red-ravening feast is Hector hitherward haled ;  
 And twelve of the goodliest children of Troy, in mine hot desire  
 Of revenge for the slaying of thee, will I slaughter before thy pyre.”

He spake, and he thought foul shame that to Hector yet should be done.  
 On his face he hurled him in front of the bier of Menoitius' son 25  
 In the dust. And his men disarrayed them of all their battle-weeds,  
 Brazen and glittering bright, and unyoked their high-neighing steeds.  
 By the galleys of Aiakus' fleetfoot son in their thousands then  
 Sat they ; and he spread an abundant funeral-feast for his men.  
 There many a goodly ox on the earth was stretched which they slew 30  
 With the red steel, many a sheep, and bleating goats not a few,  
 And many a white-tushed boar of the fat-sheathed swine huge-fed  
 Was spitted to singe o'er the flames which the Fire-god's breath fanned red ;  
 And all around the corse was the blood as from bowls outshed.  
 Then, leading the fleetfoot chieftain, the Peleus-begotten, went 35  
 The princes Achaian to godlike Agamemnon's tent,  
 Scarce winning him thither, whose soul with wrath for his friend was aflame.  
 But when unto Agamemnon's pavilion faring they came,  
 Then spake the King to the heralds of far-ringing voice, and he bade  
 Set a tripod huge on the fire, if now they might haply persuade 40

The scion of Peleus to cleanse from his body the dark-clotted gore.

But he steadfastly said them nay, and an oath thereto he swore :

“Nay, surely by Zeus, of the Gods most holy and most high,  
It may nowise be that the baths unto this mine head draw nigh,  
Ere I compass Patroclus with flame, and uppile him the earth for a tomb, 45  
And shear mine hair, for never a second time shall there come  
Such anguish as this on mine heart, while yet mid the living I fare.  
But now consent we to taste of the banquet, how loathed soe'er ;  
And command thou, King of Men Agamemnon, with morning light  
That they bring the wood for the pyre, and provide us whatso is right 50  
That the dead should have who must pass to the Land of the Shadow of Night,  
To the end that the tireless flame may kindle upon him, and burn  
Our dead from our eyes, and the folk each man to his labour may turn.”

He spake, and with right good will they hearkened his word, and obeyed. .  
Full hastily then was the feast of the eventide arrayed ; 55  
And they portioned, and rightful share of the feast lacked no man's soul.  
So when they had quenched in their hearts the desire of the meat and the bowl,  
Then passed they each to his tent, and they laid them down to sleep.  
But Peleides lay on the shore of the thunderous-plunging deep,  
Heavily groaning the while, mid the host of the Myrmidon folk, 60  
In a spot left clear of the ships, where the waves on the sea-beach broke.  
When slumber laid hold on him, loosing the bands of his spirit's care,  
Shed sweetly around,—for that spent the glorious limbs of him were  
In the hunting of Hector as swiftly by Ilium the windy they sped,—  
Then came unto him the spirit of hapless Patroclus dead, 65



In all things like him : his stature, his beautiful eyes it had,  
And his voice, and in unforgotten raiment the shape was clad.  
And over his head it stood, and it moaned and murmured the word : [stirred.  
"Thou art sleeping, Achilles ; thine heart with remembrance of me is un-  
Not in my life, but my death, thou takest for me no care. 70  
Bury me speedily : onward through Hades' gates let me fare.  
The spirits drive me afar, the phantoms of men outworn,  
And they suffer me not to greet them beyond the River's bourne ;  
But through Hades' house wide-gated I wander still forlorn.  
And give me thine hand, I beseech thee. For me is there no returning 75  
From Hades, when once ye have rendered to me the dues of the burning.  
Nevermore from our comrades aloof shall we sit, as of old we sate,  
Taking counsel together ; but me the jaws of a loathly fate  
Have swallowed, the doom whereunto in the hour of my birth I was given.  
And thy weird too, O Achilles like to the Dwellers in Heaven, 80  
Is spoken, even to die 'neath the high-born Trojans' wall.  
This too, if thou haply wilt heed my request, will I tell thee withal :  
Lay not my bones, O Achilles, to rest afar from thine own,  
But together, as fostered we were in your halls in days bygone,  
When from Opus Menoitius brought me, though naught but a child I was, 85  
To sojourn within your home, for dark bloodguiltiness' cause,  
In the day whereon mine hand the son of Amphidamas slew,  
Not of my will, but in childish wrath, as the dice we threw.  
Then in his palace Peleus the car-lord welcomed me,  
And fostered in kindly wise, and named me henchman to thee. 90

So would I that one urn also should hide our bones in the grave,  
That golden urn twin-eared which the Lady thy mother gave."

Then unto him fleet-footed Achilles answered and said :

"Wherefore to me art thou hitherward come, beloved head,  
And layest this charge upon me?—O yea, I will heed thy behest, 95  
And perform it every whit, according to this thy request.  
But draw thou nigher to me : let us but for a little space  
With woeful lamenting be comforted, clasped in each other's embrace."

He spake, and he stretched out his arms ; but naught in the grasp of him lay ;  
But the spirit beneath the earth, as a vapour that passeth away, 100  
Was gone with a shriek : upsprang Achilles amazedly,  
And he smote together his hands, and he cried with a bitter cry :

"O strange ! then even in Hades' homes—and I knew not this—  
They have spirit and shape, albeit in these no life there is.  
For all through the livelong night by my side hath the spirit stayed 105  
Of Patroclus the hapless, and mourning and lamentation he made  
With many a prayer ; and wondrous like to the man was the shade."

He spake, and in each man's spirit a passion of mourning awoke.  
And over them, still as they wailed, the dawn rose-fingered broke  
As they stood by the piteous corse. But now Agamemnon the King 110  
'Gan speed the mules and the men the wood of the burning to bring.  
From all the tents were they called, and were led by a hero bold,  
The henchman Mèriones of Idomeneus courteous-souled.  
So they went, and the timber-cleaving axes in hand they bore,  
And the ropes full deftly twined : and the mules fared on before ; 115

And upward and downward and thwartward and slantward they tramped  
But when on the spurs of Ida the fountain-flashing they stood, [evermore.  
Straightway the oaks high-crested with might and main they hewed  
With the long-edged brass ; and they fell with a crash far-echoing round.  
And these the Achaians cleft, and the billets thereof they bound 120  
On the backs of the mules ; and their hurrying feet tore up the ground  
As plainward straining they burst through the tangled brakes of the wold.  
And the woodcutters all bare logs on their shoulders, for so were they told  
Of the henchman Mëriones of Idomeneus courteous-souled.  
Then heaps upon heaps they cast all down on the shore, in the place 125  
Where Achilles was minded Patroclus' mound and his own to upraise.  
But when they had strown that measureless wood upon every hand,  
There sat they and waited in throngs : straightway did Achilles command  
The battle-revelling men of the Myrmidon host of war  
To gird them with harness of brass, and to yoke, each man to his car, 130  
His steeds, and they hasted and clad them all in their battle-gear.  
Then on the chariots mounted warrior and charioteer.  
In front were the horses, behind did the cloud of the footmen pour,  
Countless : amidst them his comrades the corpse of Patroclus bore.  
And they heaped the dead with the locks from their heads that for mourning  
And cast : and behind was Achilles the godlike clasping the head [they shore  
In grief ; for now unto Hades his noble companion he sped.  
So when they were come to the place appointed of Peleus' child,  
There set they the corse, and the stintless wood in a heap they piled.  
Then a new thought came into fleetfoot godlike Achilles' heart, 140

For his golden locks he shone as he stood by the pyre apart,  
The hair whose wealth till then for Spercheius the river had grown ;  
And over the dark sea gazing with burdened heart did he moan :

“Spercheius, my father Peleus vowed unto thee in vain  
That, when I should win to mine own dear fatherland again, 145  
Unto thee would he shear mine hair, and would offer a hecatomb,  
Yea, and with fifty rams for sacrifice would he come  
To thy fountains, thine holy place, and thine altar's incense-cloud.  
So spake the ancient,—thou gavest not that for the which he vowed.  
But now, since I shall not return to my fatherland-home, mine hair 150  
Will I give to Patroclus the hero down unto Hades to bear.”

Then laid he the tresses between the hands of his friend dear-loved  
And a passion of mourning awoke, for that all men's hearts were moved.  
And the light of the sun had gone down while yet they lamented and wept,  
But Achilles spake ; for to King Agamemnon's side he stept : 155

“Atreides,—for chiefly the host of Achaia doth heed thy behest,—  
Even of mourning at last the soul desireth rest :  
Now then from the pyre disperse thou the people, and bid them prepare  
Their meat : and to this will we look, unto whom the kinsmen's care  
Of the corse appertaineth : but stay thou the chieftains our labour to share.” 160  
So when Agamemnon the King of Men heard this that he spoke,  
Straightway to the shapely ships he bade disperse the folk.  
But the kinsmen abode there yet, and the wood in order arrayed.  
A hundred feet in length and in breadth that pyre they made.  
On the topmost height of the pyre heart-stricken the corpse they laid ; 165



And in front of the pyre full many a fatling sheep they flayed,  
 And dressed them, with trailfoot kine wreath-horned ; and the fat of them all  
 Achilles took, and the corpse he covered therewith as a pall  
 From the head to the feet, and the carcasses piled he on either hand ;  
 And therebetween set vases of honey and ointment to stand 170  
 Leaning against the bier : and steeds high-crested four  
 He cast on the funeral pyre right hastily, groaning sore.  
 Nine hounds there were that fed at the feastful board of the king,  
 And of twain he severed the throats, and these on the pyre did he fling ;  
 Yea, twelve fair children withal of the great-heart Trojan men, 175  
 Whom he slew with the brass ; for his heart with a purpose grim burned then.  
 And the flame's iron strength did he set thereto, to devour the same.  
 Then wailed he aloud, and he called on his dear companion's name :  
 " All hail, Patroclus, albeit in Hades' halls thou be !  
 For now do I bring to fulfilment whatso I promised to thee. 180  
 Twelve goodly sons of the great-heart Trojans the flames consume  
 With thee : but Hector the son of Priam nowise I doom  
 To the fire to devour ; but the ravening dogs shall find him a tomb."  
 So spake he his threat : but of Hector the dogs had not their will,  
 But from dogs did the Daughter of Zeus Aphroditê defend him still 185  
 By day and by night, and with oil ambrosial, rosy of scent,  
 She anointed him o'er, that his flesh might nowise in dragging be rent.  
 And Phoebus Apollo drew thereover a thick dark cloud  
 From the height of the heaven to the plain, and all that place did he shroud  
 Whereon the dead man lay, that the light of the sun, made dim 190

Till the end came, might not shrivel the flesh upon sinew and limb.

But the pyre of the dead Patroclus had not yet burst into flame.  
Then a thought to the heart of fleetfoot Achilles the godlike came ;  
For aback from the pyre he drew, and he cried to the Winds in prayer,  
Even twain, to the North-wind and West-wind, and promised them offerings fair,  
And besought them, the while from a golden chalice the wine he shed, [195  
To come, that with speed the fire might be kindled upon the dead,  
And the wood might hasten to blaze : then Iris heard as he cried,  
And swiftly away to the Winds with the tidings thereof she hied.  
There, thronged in the West-wind's palace, the hall of the Tempest-king, 200  
The Winds at the banquet feasted ; and Iris hastening  
Stood on the threshold of stone : and so soon as their eyes espied,  
All leapt to their feet, and each one beckoned her unto his side.  
But the Goddess refused to sit, and she spake, even there as she stood :

“ For me no seat ; for aback must I fare unto Ocean's flood, 205  
To the Aethiops' land, for now are they slaying the hecatombs there  
To the Deathless : thither must I, the sacrifice-feast to share.  
But Achilles is calling the North and the West winds' roaring wings  
To come to his help, and he promiseth goodly offerings,  
To the end ye may hasten to kindle the funeral pyre whereon 210  
Patroclus is laid, for whom the Achaians all make moan.”

So spake she, and hasted away ; and with noise unearthly loud  
Upsprang they, driving before them huddled cloud on cloud.  
And they suddenly swooped on the sea, and they breathed, and the surges leapt  
'Neath the wild-shrilling blast : o'er the fruitful land of Troy they swept ; 215

And they fell on the pyre, and unearthly loud 'gan roar the fire.  
All night were they rolling and hurling together the flames of the pyre,  
Wild blòwing and high : and fleetfoot Achilles the long night through,  
With a double-chalice in hand, from a golden bowl ever drew  
The wine, and he poured it on earth, that the ground was wet withal : 220  
And ever upon the hapless Patroclus' soul did he call.  
And as mourneth a sire for his son, as he burneth the bones of the dead,  
Whose dying hath anguished his hapless parents, a son new-wed,  
Even so did Achilles mourn for his comrade, burning his bones,  
Slow moving around the pyre, with heavy and vehement moans. 225

In the hour when the Morning-star goeth forth, Earth's herald to be  
Of light, ere spreadeth the saffron-mantled Dawn o'er the sea,  
Then sank the blaze of the pyre, and the flame no longer burned,  
And the Winds went back again, and unto their mansion returned  
Over the Thracian Sea, and with maddening surges he sighed. 230  
But Peleides turned from the place where the red glow darkened and died,  
And he lay down wearied, and rushed on the hero slumber sweet.  
And now did the gathering kings round the son of Atreus meet ;  
And the sound of the tramp of their coming the bands of his slumber brake ;  
And he raised himself, and he sat, and the word to the princes he spake : 235

" Atreides, and ye the chiefs of Achaia's host of war,  
First quench ye the fiery glow with the flame-flushed wine all o'er,  
Unto whatsoever part the fury of flame hath won :  
Then let us gather the bones of Patroclus Menoitius' son. [240  
From the rest shall ye sunder them well, full lightly shall these be discerned ;

For they lay in the midst of the pyre, but apart were the others burned  
On the uttermost edges thereof confusedly, horses and men.  
In a golden urn mid the folded fat let us lay them then,  
Till the hour when I myself shall be hidden in Hades the dim.  
But no mound passing great do I bid you to pile over him, 245  
But such as is seemly : thereafter also that mightier one  
Both broad and high the Achaians shall build, that, when I am gone,  
Shall be left alive where the lines of the many-benched ships are arrayed."

He spake, and the hest of Peleus' fleetfoot son they obeyed.  
First with the flame-flushed wine did they quench that glowing heap 250  
Whereso the flame had won, and the crumbled ash lay deep.  
And the white bones gathered they then of their comrade courteous-souled  
With weeping, and laid them mid folded fat in an urn of gold.  
In the tent did they set it, a pall of the linen spread they above.  
Then traced they the barrow's compass, and laid the foundations thereof 255  
About the pyre, and the mounded earth heaped they to a hill.  
So piled they the barrow, and backward they turned : but Achilles still  
There stayed the folk, and he bade sit down in a mighty ring ;  
And prizes, caldrons and tripods, forth of the ships did he bring ;  
And horses and mules and oxen of stately heads he brought, 260  
And women lovely-girded, and hoary steel unwrought.

First did he set for the swift car-steeds a glorious prize,  
A woman to lead away, in peerless loomwork wise,  
And a twin-eared tripod ; measures twenty and two it held :  
Even these for the first : for the second a mare by the yoke unquelled 265



Of six years old, in foal with a mule undropt as yet.

For the third a beautiful caldron unsullied of flame hath he set

Yet bright from the craftsman's hands, and measures four did it hold.

For the fourth of the chariots he set in the midst two talents of gold ;

For the fifth an urn twin-eared, unstained of the flame-born smoke.

270

And he rose full height, and amidst of the Argive men he spoke :

“ Atreides, and all ye men of Achaia greave-bedight,

The prizes that wait for the charioteers lie here in your sight.

If the chieftains but strove at another's funeral-feast this day,

Myself should the first prize win, and bear to my tent away ;

275

For ye know how far mine horses in swiftness excel and in fire,

For immortal they are, and Poseidon gave them unto my sire,

Unto Peleus, and he on his son bestowed that gift of heaven.

But for me and my thunderfoot steeds this contest abideth unstriven :

They have lost the glory and grace of so noble a chariot-lord,

280

So gentle, who oftentimes the oil clear-flowing hath poured

On the manes that his hands had cleansed with the fountain's crystal flow.

For him be they standing and grieving, and earthward drooping low

Are their manes, the while they stand with hearts deep-stricken with woe.

But make you ready the rest, whosoe'er the Achaians among

285

Putteth his trust in his steeds and his chariot fashioned strong.”

So spake Peleides, and rose the chiefs, swift lords of the car.

'Twas Eumêlus, a king of men, that arose up first by far,

The belovèd child of Admêtus, the car-renownèd one :

And after him rose Diomedes the stalwart, Tydeus' son ;

290

And the horses of Tros to his chariot he yoked, which he won in the strife  
From Aeneas, howbeit Apollo saved that hero's life.

Next him rose golden-haired Menelaus, Atreus' seed,  
The Zeus-begotten, and horses swift to the yoke did he lead,  
Podargus his own, and Aithê the mare of his brother the King : 295  
That mare unto him did Anchises' child Echepôlus bring  
That he might not follow his spear unto Ilium the windy-towered,  
But abide mid the bliss of his home, since Zeus upon him had showered  
Great substance, and Sikyon's wide-meadowed land was his dwelling-place :  
Even her did he lead 'neath the yoke fierce-straining, afire for the race. 300  
And his fair-maned steeds to the chariot the fourth did Antilochus bring,  
The glorious child of Nestor, the noble-hearted king

Of Neleus begotten, and fleetfoot horses, a Pylian brood,  
Must speed his chariot on : now nigh him his father stood,  
And, wise though his son was aforetime, he spake good rede in his ear : 305

“ Antilochus, young though thou art, thou wast held exceeding dear  
Of Zeus and Apollo, and manifold chariot-lore hast thou  
Which they taught to thee : little it needeth that I should lesson thee now.  
Full well canst thou double the turning-post ; but thy steeds be slow  
As matched with the rest, and this may be yet thy undoing, I trow. 310

Sooth, fleeter their car-steeds be, but the lords that speed them on  
In wisdom and prudent counsel excel not thee, my son.  
Come then, lay up in thine heart, my beloved, the lore of the wise,  
And their manifold wisdom, lest haply thine hands let slip the prize.  
By wisdom the woodman accomplisheth more than by bodily might, 315

And by wisdom the helmsman moreover his swift ship guideth aright  
Amidst of the wine-dark sea, when the wild winds buffet her sore ;  
And by wisdom driver with driver striving availeth more.  
But whoso, putting his trust in naught save chariot and horse,  
With wide sweep recklessly wheeleth at either end of the course, 320  
His steeds in the race run wild, and he holdeth them not in hand :  
But whoso hath worsen steeds, but is wise to understand,  
Ever marking the goal doth he wheel close round, and he giveth good heed  
How far at the first with the ox-hide reins to force the steed :  
Safely he holdeth him, watching the leaders with glance full keen. 325  
Now a mark will I show, and it shall not escape thee, a sign clear-seen :  
There riseth a dry stock up, some fathom's height from the plain,  
Of an oak-tree, or pine, and undecayed it is of the rain ;  
And beside it upreared upon either hand two stones gleam white  
Where two ways meet, and the course lieth level to left and to right. 330  
It is haply the cairn of a man that died long heretofore,  
Or haply a turning-post of the men of the days of yore,  
For a goal is it now appointed of godlike Achilles the fleet.  
Thereby shalt thou guide close-skimming thy car and thine horses' feet ;  
And thyself in the chariot goodly-knit to the leftward bow 335  
Lightly away from thy team, and the rightward horse scourge thou  
With shouting, and give loose reins with eager hands unto him.  
And as for thy leftward steed, the very goal let him skim  
In such wise that the goal by the nave of the chariot-wheel well-wrought  
Shall seem to be grazed : but give good heed that thou touch it not, 340

Lest haply thou maim thine horses and wreck thy chariot :—glee  
Should come thereof to the rest, but shame and reproach unto thee.  
Now, O my beloved, be wise, and heedful of this my behest ;  
For if thou at the turning-post shalt pass in the race the rest,  
There is none shall with swift rush overtake thee, nor pass thee by, 345  
Not though in thy track with Arcion the steed divine he should fly,  
The fleetfoot pride of Adrêstus, the charger of heaven-born strain,  
Or Laomedon's goodly steeds, which were bred on the Trojan plain."

So Nestor spake, and again in his place the Nêleïd king  
Sat down, having told to his son the sum of everything. 350  
And Mêrioncs hath harnessed his fair-maned car-steeds last.  
So they stepped to the chariot floors, and the lots mid the helm they cast ;  
And Achilles shook, and the lot of Antilochus, Nestor's son,  
Leapt forth, and next him a place the lord Eumêlus won.  
And the third was Atreus' seed, Menelaus the spear-renowned ; 355  
Next Mêriones must drive, and Tydeus' son hath found,  
Albeit by far the best, the outermost place for his car.  
Then stood they arow, and Achilles showed them the goal afar  
In the level plain, and he set thereby a watcher keen,  
Phoenix the godlike,—his father's henchman the ancient had been,— 360  
Who should mark their running, and faithfully tell whatsoe'er he had seen.

Then all together above their steeds they uplifted on high  
The scourge, and they smote with the lash, with sudden-storming cry  
Cheering them on ; and with wild speed over the plain they darted  
Swiftly away from the ships, and beneath their breasts upstart 365



The dust, and like to a cloud or a tempest in air it hung ;  
 And the manes of them tossed and streamed on the blasts of the winds far-flung.  
 Now low were the chariots skimming the earth, the dispenser of good,  
 And in mid air bounded anon ; and the chariot-drivers stood  
 High on their chariot-floors, and with yearning for victory 370  
 Throbb'd each man's heart, and from each man rang the challenge-cry  
 To his horses, and over the plain in a whirlwind of dust did they fly.

But now when the fleetfoot steeds o'er the last of the course 'gan speed  
 Back to the grey sea, then did the mettle of every steed  
 Show forth, and their uttermost swiftness was strained ; and suddenly burst 375  
 Twain forth from the rest, and the mares of Pheres' son were first.  
 But after them forth from the throng Diomedes' stallions leapt,  
 The horses of Tros, nor afar, but exceeding nigh him they kept ;  
 For ever they seemed as though they would mount the chariot-floor  
 Of Eumêlus, and hot on his back did the breath of their nostrils pour, 380  
 And his shoulders broad, for their heads overhung him as onward they flew.  
 And now had he passed him, or doubtful had left it, for level he drew ;  
 But to Tydeus' son came Phoebus Apollo in wrathful spite,  
 And suddenly out of his hands the shining scourge did he smite.  
 Thereat the eyes of the hero with angry tears ran o'er, 385  
 For he marked how the mares sped on, yea, faster than theretofore,  
 And the speed of his own steeds slackened, for goadless ran they then.  
 But Apollo's guile against Tydeus' son hath escaped not the ken  
 Of Athênê, and after the shepherd of folk she sped forthright ; [390  
 And she gave him the scourge, and she thrilled his horses with mettlesome might.

Then after Admêtus' son the Goddess rushed in her wrath,  
 And she snapped his chariot-yoke, and the horses aside from the path  
 Swerved as they ran, and earthward wrenched was the chariot-pole,  
 And hurled from the car to the earth by the wheel did Eumêlus roll. [395  
 Flayed were the elbows and mouth and the nose of him dashed to the ground ;  
 Bruised o'er the brows was his forehead, his eyes with tears were drowned,  
 And the breath from his body was beaten, that choked was his voice ere he  
 But Tydeides turned from the wreck his thunderfoot horses aside, [cried.  
 Far leaping afront of the rest, for Athênê filled each steed  
 With mettlesome spirit, and crowned their lord with the glory-meed. 400  
 And next unto him Menelaus the golden-haired on pressed.  
 But Antilochus unto the steeds of his father shouted his hest :  
 " Press into the strife ye also ! Strain ye your uttermost speed !  
 Good sooth, but in no wise I bid you contend with them that lead,  
 The horses of Tydeus' war-wise son, whose every limb 405  
 Athênê with swiftness hath thrilled, setting glory's crown upon him.  
 But the horses of Atreus' child, overtake ye them, flying fast,  
 And be not of these outstripped, lest reproach on your heads be cast  
 Of Aithê, who is but a mare !—Brave steeds, why lag ye behind ?  
 For this do I tell you, and surely my promise fulfilment shall find : 410  
 No loving care shall ye have of Nestor the shepherd of folk,  
 But with keen brass you shall he slay forthright with a vengeance-stroke,  
 If now of your heedlessness we shall win but the worsèr meed.  
 Nay, follow them hard, and hasten ye on at your uttermost speed.  
 And for this myself will contrive, and devise of my crafty thought 415

In the narrow way to pass them : my wit shall fail me not."

So spake he, and terror-thrilled by the prince's threatening cry  
Faster they ran for a little space ; and swiftly the eye  
Of battle-bider Antilochus marked where the path grew strait.  
A rift there was in the ground, where a pent-up winter spate 420  
Had swept the earth from the track, and had hollowed the whole place deep.  
Thither, lest wheels should jostle, his course did Atreides keep.  
But Antilochus, sideways turning his thunderfoot steeds in the race,  
Aslant from the track, and a little swerving athwart, gave chase.  
Then to Antilochus shouted Atreides in sudden fear : 425

" Antilochus, madly thou drivest ! Hold thine horses here !  
For strait is the way,—thou shalt pass full soon in the wider plain,—  
Lest chariot with chariot haply thou jostle, and wreck us twain."

So spake he, but onward Antilochus drave in haste more hot,  
Speeding his steeds with the goad as one that heard him not. 430  
And far as a discus hurled from the shoulder speedeth its flight,  
Whirled by a lusty man making uttermost proof of his might  
So far did they dash to the front : but Atreides' steeds gave back,  
For that now did himself of purpose the haste of his driving slack,  
Lest haply the thunderfoot horses should clash in the midst of the way, 435  
And should overturn the chariots goodly-knit, and they  
Into the dust should be hurled in their lust for the victory.  
But with him Menelaus the bright-haired chode, and loud cried he :

" Antilochus, no man on earth in malice o'erpasseth thee !  
On to thy ruin !—They lie, the Achaians who deem thee wise ! 440

Yet surely an oath shalt thou take even so ere thou win the prize."

So spake he, and cried on his horses the prince of the golden hair :

"On!—slack not your running, nor stand ye still, how vexèd soe'er.

Sooner the feet and the knees of these shall be toil-fordone

Than yours, for by this from both the strength of their youth is gone." 445

So spake he, and terror-thrilled by their prince's threatening cry

Faster they ran, and now to the others drew swiftly anigh.

But watching the horses the while there sat that mighty crowd

Of the Argives, as over the plain they flew mid the wild dust-cloud.

And Idomeneus, chieftain of Crete, first marked as onward they drew, 450

For that highest he sat, and apart, in a place with a clear wide view.

Then heard he a shout from afar, and the voice of him that cried

He knew, and a horse clear-seen as he shot to the front he espied,

A horse that was otherwhere chesnut, but midst of his forehead gleamed

A white star forth, and round as the midnight moon it seemed. 455

And he rose to his feet, and amidst of the Argive men he spoke :

"O friends, ye chiefs of the Argives, lords of many folk,

Do I, I only, discern yon horses, or likewise ye?

Lo, other the foremost car-steeds are, as it seemeth to me,

And other appeareth their driver :—Eumêlus' steeds, I doubt, 460

Which were first in the outward course, shall have been in the plain thrown out :

For surely I marked them foremost around the goal-post sweeping,

But now may I nowhere espy them, albeit mine eyes are keeping

Keen watch, o'er the Trojan plain as they glance upon every side. [465

Or the reins have slipped from the grasp of their lord, nor availed he to guide



Their course round the goal-post aright, and in turning he cleared it not.  
 There was he hurled to the earth, and his chariot was shattered, I wot,  
 And the mares plunged wildly, when filled were their hearts with the rage of  
 But arise ye also and look : it may be I discern not aright ; [affright.  
 Yet seemeth to me yon hero afront of the chariot-throng 470  
 An Aetolian by birth, and a ruler the Argive nations among,  
 Scion of Tydeus the queller of steeds, Diomedes the strong."

But with foul upbraiding did Aias Oileus' swift son say :  
 "Idomeneus, why dost thou prate oversoon?—lo, far away  
 Are the high-stepping horses that over the plain wide-stretching dart. 475  
 Neither so much the youngest amidst of the Argives thou art,  
 Nor yet do thine eyes, as they stare from thine head, the keenliest see.  
 Tush, man!—thou wilt ever be prating with words : it beseemeth not thee  
 To be naught but a prating babbler ; for here there be better than thou.  
 The selfsame horses that led heretofore be the foremost now, 480  
 The steeds of Eumêlus, and still as he rideth their reins doth he hold."

Then answered and spake the lord of the Cretans wrathful-souled :  
 "Thou prince in contention and evil counsel!—in all beside  
 Art thou least of the Argive men, O heart of discourteous pride!  
 Come now, a tripod or caldron for issue hereof let us stake, 485  
 And Atreus' son Agamemnon our daysman herein let us make  
 Which horses be first : thou shalt buy understanding so with a price."

He spake ; straightway did Oileus' swift son Aias rise  
 In fury, with bitter words to render him answer again.  
 And now had the storm of strife raged higher between these twain, 490

But Achilles' self is uprisen to hold them aback, and he saith :

“Nay, answer each other no more with words of bitter breath,  
And with foul speech, Aias, Idomeneus : not for your honour it is.  
Yourselves would have indignation if any beside did this.

But sit ye still in the throng, and behold with your eyes and see 495  
Yon steeds : in a moment themselves, as they strain for the victory,  
Shall have hitherward come ; thereafter shall none have doubt any more  
Of the Argive steeds, who laggeth behind, who speedeth before.”

So spake he, and lo, the scion of Tydeus was drawn full nigh ;  
And aye as he drave was he scourging their shoulders, as, bounding high, 500  
Swiftly his horses were flying along the course, and beat  
Evermore on the charioteer the spurts of the dust from their feet ;  
And his chariot with gold bedight and with tin followed hard on the heels  
Of the fleetfoot steeds : sooth, faint was the trace that the tires of the wheels  
Were leaving behind them, the while twin furrows to rearward they drew 505  
In the light-lying dust :—on, on, in fiery haste they flew,  
Till he stood in the midst of the ring, the while from his car-steeds' crests  
Down dropped the abundant sweat, and streamed to the earth from their chests.  
Down from his chariot glittering bright to the earth he hath sprung,  
And the whip on the yoke hath he laid ; nor loitering backward hung 510  
Stout Sthenelus : swiftly he rose, and his hand on the prize he laid,  
And he gave in charge to his haughty comrades the captive maid  
And the twin-eared tripod : himself to the steeds' unyoking gave heed.  
Now driving his chariot cometh Antilochus, Nestor's seed,  
Who by cunning, and nowise by swiftness, had passed Menelaus by : 515

Yet even so Menelaus' swift steeds pressed full nigh.

And far as a horse is afront of the wheel, whose swift feet strain

As he speedeth his lord high-borne on his chariot over the plain,

When the uttermost ends of the hairs of his tail light-wafted graze

The tire of the wheel, that it runneth full nigh, and scant is the space 520

That lieth between as he raceth over the plain wide-spread ;

So close Menelaus behind the princely Antilochus sped :

Howbeit at first had he lagged by the length of a discus-cast,

But swiftly he closed on him now, for the mettlesome fire waxed fast

Of the mare of the king Agamemnon, Aithê of beautiful mane. 525

Yea, had but a little been left of the course to be run by the twain,

Menelaus had surely outstripped him, nor left the issue in doubt.

But Mêriones the while, Idomeneus' henchman stout,

Behind Menelaus the glorious lagged by the cast of a spear,

For that slowest of all were his fair-maned steeds, and their charioteer 530

Least of them all could skill to drive the car in the race.

But the son of Admêtus followed them all in the hindmost place,

Dragging his fair-wrought chariot, and driving his steeds before.

And fleetfoot Achilles the godlike beheld it, and pitied him sore.

And he rose, and he uttered the swift-winged words mid the Argive host : 535

“ Lo, driveth his fleetfoot horses the best man hindermost !

Go to, let us give him a guerdon, as seemly it is to be done,

Even the second : the first be the meed of Tydeus' son.”

He spake, and they shouted yea to his hest, even all that heard :

And now had he given the steed,—for the people had praised that word ;— 540

Howbeit Antilochus, child of Nestor the mighty-souled,  
To plead with Peleides arose, and he spake out loud and bold :

“ Achilles, if this thy word thou fulfil, sore wroth shall I be  
With thee, for thou goest about to wrest my guerdon from me,  
Bethinking thee thus, how that foiled his car and his swift steeds were, 545  
And himself, good man though he be :—yet should he have cried in prayer  
To the Deathless : then had he nowise been last in the race, I wis.  
But and if thou hast pity of him, if dear to thy soul he is,  
Good sooth, thou hast gold good store in thy tent, and brass hast thou,  
And sheep, and handmaid-thralls, and thunderfoot horses enow. 550  
Take of them, and give him hereafter even a goodlier meed,  
Or now straightway, that the shout of the people may praise thy deed.  
But the mare will I not yield up :—whosoever would wrest my right,  
Let him make him ready with me in contention of hands to fight.”

So spake he, and fleetfoot Achilles the godlike smiled to hear, 555  
Having joy in Antilochus, seeing he held that friend full dear.  
And answer he made unto him, and the light-winged words he spake :

“ Antilochus, if thou wilt have it, that somewhat beside I take  
Of my store to bestow on Eumêlus, yea, even this shall be done.  
I will give him a breastplate, the which from Asteropaius I won, 560  
Brazen, a casting thereon of the tin all glittering bright  
Is overlaid : a gift of price shall it be in his sight.”

Then bade he his dearly-belovèd friend Automedon bring  
The corslet forth of the tent, and he hasted and bare to the king.  
So he gave to Eumêlus, and blithe he received that glorious thing. 565



But lo, in their midst Menelaus with heart sore vexed doth stand,  
 With Antilochus grievously wroth, and the herald gave to his hand  
 The sceptre, and silence withal he proclaimed to the Argive folk.  
 Thereafter amidst of the people the godlike hero spoke :

“ Antilochus, once thou wert wise :—what sayest thou now of thy deeds ? 570  
 Thou hast poured contempt on my prowess, and thwarted my chariot-steeds,  
 Thrusting before me thine own :—thou know’st they be worser far.  
 Come now, ye lords of the Argive men, and captains of war,  
 Judge ye betwixt us twain—yet accept not persons, I pray,  
 Lest one of the brazen-harnessed Achaians haply should say : 575

‘ By lies did the lord Menelaus Antilochus overbear,  
 And hath taken the mare away, yet worser his own steeds were,  
 Howbeit in prowess and strength himself was the mightier one.’  
 Nay, but myself will be judge : of the Danaan host there is none,  
 I ween, shall upbraid me herein, for that upright my judgment shall be. 580  
 Antilochus, fostered of Zeus, draw nigh, as behoveth thee :

Stand thou in front of thine horses and car, in thine hands hold thou  
 The lithe whip, even the same wherewithal thou wert driving but now.  
 By the Earth-shaker, Girder of Lands, swear, laying thine hand the while  
 On the steeds, that thou didst not foul my chariot by wilful guile.” 585  
 But to him Antilochus prudent of spirit made reply :

“ Bear with me now : far younger, O King Menelaus, am I  
 Than thou, for in might and in majesty greater thou art, O King.  
 Thou knowest a young man’s wit, and whence his offences spring ;  
 For hasty he is of his purpose, and light of his counsel is he.

Let therefore thine heart be patient : the mare, I will give her to thee,  
 The mare which I won : yea, though of the wealth in my tent thou shouldst  
 Some greater thing, I were fain straightway to give thee the same, [claim  
 Rather than, O thou fostered of Zeus, to be cast evermore  
 Out of thine heart, and to stand a transgressor the Gods before." 595

Then the scion of great-heart Nestor brought that mare with the word,  
 And gave her to Lord Menelaus' hands, and his spirit was stirred  
 With gladness, as when the dew droppeth down on the ripening ears  
 Of corn, when the fields unto harvest bristle with golden spears :  
 Even so, Menelaus, refreshed was thy spirit within thy breast. 600  
 And he lifted his voice, and the light-winged words to the prince he addressed :

"Antilochus, now from mine anger against thee myself will refrain,  
 For thou hast not aforetime been wanton-wild, nor in spirit vain :  
 Howbeit thy youth this once hath gotten the better of thee.  
 Yet beware that hereafter thou take not thy betters by subtlety : 605  
 For scarce had another Achaian beside thee won me o'er.  
 But thou hast endured affliction and toil both great and sore,  
 Even thou and thy gallant sire, and thy brother withal, in my cause.  
 Therefore to this thy prayer will I bend : yea, mine though she was,  
 The mare will I give unto thee, that all these also may know 610  
 That ne'er high-minded am I, that mine heart unto wrath is slow."

Then unto Antilochus' comrade Noëmon he gave the mare  
 To lead, but the caldron bright to his own pavilion they bare.  
 And the talents twain of gold bare Mériones away,  
 The fourth prize, even as he drave : but unclaimed the fifth prize lay, 615

The twin-eared urn : and this did Achilles to Nestor take ;  
Through the throng of the Argives he bare it, and came to his side, and spake :

“ Lo there, be this thine, father, to lie mid thy treasure-store,  
A memorial to be of Patroclus' funeral-feast : never more  
Mid the Argive men shalt thou see him : to thee this prize give I 625  
Unwon : for with fists shalt thou win no fight ; no fall shalt thou try,  
Nor the javelin-cast shalt essay ; nor thy feet may win thee renown ;  
For the weight of the years is upon thee, a sore load boweth thee down.”

So he laid that vase in his hands, and he took that gift, and rejoiced,  
And he sped the winged word-flight, and spake unto him glad-voiced : 625

“ Yea, fitly and well, my son, hast thou spoken everything.  
No more are my limbs firm-knit, nor my feet, neither lightly swing  
Mine arms from my shoulders on either side in the athlete-ring.  
Ah for the strength that was mine, and the youth and the lustihead,  
In the day the Epeians buried the lord Amarynkes dead 630  
In Buprasion, and holden were funeral games for the king by his sons.  
There none such as I, nor amidst the Epeian valiant ones,  
Nor the Pylian men, nor Aetolians mighty-hearted, was found.  
Klytomêdes, Enops' son, with the fist smote I to the ground.  
Ankaïos of Pleuron in wrestling I threw, when against me he stood ; 635  
And Iphiklus' feet I outran, yet the man was a runner good.  
Polydorus and Phyleus I overcame with the javelin-cast.  
In the chariot-race alone of Aktor's sons was I passed :  
Two men against one did they thrust before me, for jealous they were,  
Seeing the goodliest prize was like to be lost to them there. 640

Twins were they, and aye with the reins did the one the car-steeds guide ;  
Ever he swayed the reins, and the lash by his fellow was plied.  
Yea, so was I once : but the younger men press forward now  
Unto suchlike deeds ; but for me, unto grievous eld must I bow.  
But then, ah then mid the heroes was Nestor nowise the least. 645  
Now pass thou on, and honour thy friend with the funeral-feast.  
But for this, with joy I receive it, and gloweth mine heart in the thought  
That ever thou bearest my friendship in mind : thou forgettest not  
The honour wherewith it beseemeth that I mid the Argives be crowned.  
And for this thy kindness to thee may the grace of the Gods abound." 650  
He spake ; through the mighty Achaian throng did Pelceides speed,  
When now he had hearkened to all the praise of Nêleus' seed.  
For the terrible strife of the fists the prizes forth did he bring :  
A toil-strong mule did he lead, and he bound her amidst of the ring,  
Unbroken, of six years old, which is hardest to tame to the yoke : 655  
And a double-chalice cup for the man that should bow 'neath the stroke.  
And he rose full-height, and the word in the midst of the Argives he spoke :  
" O son of Atreus, and all ye Achaians greave-bedight,  
For these do we call upon twain, even such as be chiefest in might,  
To uplift their hands, and to smite with the fist ; and to whomso of these 660  
Apollo shall victory give, and ye be the witnesses,  
Back to his tent returning the toil-strong mule let him lead,  
And the double-chalice cup shall the vanquished take for his meed."  
He spake, and a man right stalwart and tall uprose thereupon,  
Cunning in craft of the fist, Epeius Panopeus' son ; 665



And he laid on the toil-strong mule his hand, and thus did he say :

“ Let the man draw nigh who shall bear the double-chalice away.

But the mule no man of all the Argives beside shall win,

With the fist overcoming me, for I vaunt me the best herein.

Sufficeth it not that the battle-cunning I lack ?—who then

670

Hath perfect knowledge of all the crafts of the children of men ?

For thus do I say, and the thing shall be surely accomplished so—

I will utterly bruise the flesh, I will shatter the bones of my foe.

Abiding here in a throng let his kinsmen ready stand,

[675

Who shall bear him hence when he falleth to earth stricken down by mine hand.”

So spake he, and hushed were they all for a season, and answered him none :

And a godlike wight, Euryalus, rose against him alone,

The son of Talaon's scion, even Mekistes the king,

Who of old, when fallen was Oedipus, came to his burying

Unto Thebes, and all the children of Kadmus he vanquished there.

680

Him did Tydeides the spear-renowned for the strife prepare,

And he spake to him words of cheer, and he longed for his victory sore.

First cast he a girdle about him, thereafter the gauntlets he bore

And gave to him, well-cut thongs of a lealand ox's hide.

So when they had girded them, into the midst of the ring did they stride, 685

And uplifted their arms, and now with brawny hands they twain

Closed in the fight, and heavily fell the blows amain.

And a terrible clashing of teeth there was, and the sweat forth broke

All over their limbs, till godlike Epeius rose to the stroke

And smote, as he watched his time, on his cheek : short space he availed 690

To stand, for his goodly limbs beneath him fainted and failed.  
 And as when on a kelp-strewn beach 'neath a shiver of Boreas' breath  
 Upleapeth a fish, then plungeth the darkling wave beneath,  
 So smitten he leapt : and Epeius the noble-souled from the ground  
 Upraised him, and set on his feet : then gathered his comrades around, 695  
 And the stricken with helpless-trailing feet through the concourse they led,  
 Forth-spitting the clotted blood, while sideways drooped his head.  
 And they caused him to sit in their midst all dazed and with swimming eyes ;  
 But themselves for the double-chalice went, and they bare him his prize.

Then in the Danaans' sight set forth Peleides again 700  
 Guerdons—the third were these—for the wrestlers' bitter strain :  
 For him that should conquer, a mighty tripod, bestrider of flame,  
 And at oxen two and ten the Achaians priced the same.  
 For the vanquished, a woman-thrall in manifold labours wise  
 Did he set in the midst, and at oxen four they valued her price. 705  
 And he rose full-height, and aloud to the Argive men did he call :

“ Rise, ye which be fain to prove your prowess in this withal.”  
 So spake he, and up rose Aias the giant, Telamon's son,  
 And Odysseus the perfect in wiliness, manifold-counselled one.  
 So they girded themselves, and forth in the midst of the ring did they stand ;  
 And they clasped each other about with grip of the brawny hand. [710  
 As gable-rafters they seemed, which a craftsman renowned hath pight  
 On the roof of a high-built house, to break the wild winds' might.  
 And the very backs of them creaked 'neath the strain of the giant grip [715  
 Stark-tugging, and down from their limbs like rain did the sweat of them drip ;

And all along the shoulders and ribs of the heroes upstarted  
 Weal upon weal bright-crimson with blood, and eager-hearted  
 For the winning ever they strove of the tripod fashioned fair.  
 Neither Odysseus might trip his foe and earthward bear,  
 Neither Aias availed ; but Odysseus' stalwart strength held fast. 720  
 So when the Achaians greave-bedight 'gan chafe at the last,  
 Then to his foe Telamonian Aias the mighty cried :

“ O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus in wiles well-tried,  
 Thou lift me, or I lift thee, and the rest let Zeus decide.”

Then he heaved up his foe ; yet forgot not his cunning the Craft-endowed, 725  
 But he struck him behind the knee, that the limbs of Aias bowed.  
 Down fell he backward, and fell on his breast Laertes' son  
 Odysseus ; and marvelled the folk with rapt gaze looking thereon.  
 Thereafter Odysseus the godlike, the toil-tried, essayed to lift  
 His foe, but prevailed not, and only a little from earth did he shift ; 730  
 But he smote in his knee, and heavily down to the earth fell they  
 Locked side by side, and the dust defiled them there as they lay.  
 But they leapt to their feet, and the third time now had they wrestled again,  
 But Achilles himself arose, and he spake to bid them refrain :

“ Contend ye no more, neither suffer affliction of labour and pain. 735  
 The victory lieth with both : let each take equal prize ;  
 And come ye, that other Achaians withal to the strife may arise.”

He spake, and with right good will they hearkened his rede, and obeyed ;  
 And their bodies from dust-defilement they cleansed, and in tunics arrayed.

Then set Peleides forth a mazer of silver mould, 740

The prize for fleetness of foot : six measures the same would hold ;  
And for beauty there was not the like thereof in any land,  
For that fashioned it was of Sidonian craftsmen cunning of hand,  
And Phœnician shipmen bare it over the misty wave :  
In the haven they set it, and unto Thoas the gift they gave. 745  
And Eunêus Iêson's son to Patroclus the hero brought  
That bowl, and the child of Priam Lykaon from thralldom it bought.  
Even this at the burial-feast of his friend did Achilles ordain  
For the man who by swiftness of feet in the race that guerdon should gain.  
And a stately ox huge-fed did he set for the second therein, 750  
And half a talent of gold should the last of the runners win.  
And he rose full-height, and aloud to the Argive men did he call :  
    " Rise, ye which be fain to prove your prowess in this withal."  
He spake, and Oïleus' child, swift Aias, rose thereupon,  
And Odysseus of manifold counsels, and up rose Nestor's son 755  
Antilochus : peerless he was in the race mid the younger men.  
Ranged ready they stood ; and Odysseus showed them the goal-post then.  
Hard strained they away from the start, and suddenly darted ahead  
Oïleus' son, but Odysseus the godlike behind him sped  
Close on him, as when some fair-girt woman holdeth anigh 760  
To her bosom the weaving-rod, which her fingers deftly ply  
As she draweth along the warp the thread, ever bringing it close  
To her bosom : so nigh was Odysseus running, and ere dust rose  
From the footfall of Aias, fell in the print thereof his feet,  
And the breath of Odysseus the godlike down on the head of him beat, 765



So swiftly ever he ran. Loud shouted Achaia's array  
 Beholding him victory-fain, and his eager speed cheered they.  
 But when now they were running the last of the course, Odysseus cried  
 In prayer his heart within to Athênê the flashing-eyed :

“ Hear, Goddess, come to my feet a helper good at need ! ”

770

So spake he in prayer, and Pallas Athênê heard him plead,  
 And her might was as wings in his arms, in his feet thrilled lightsome speed.  
 But when they were even at point to dart on the prize as they ran,  
 There Aias slipped in the race—'twas the Goddess foiled the man—  
 Even there where the filth of the loud-lowing steers o'er the earth was shed,  
 The beasts that Achilles had slain for the pyre of Patroclus dead. [775  
 And his nostrils and mouth with the foulness were filled, as he wallowed therein.  
 So the bowl did Odysseus the godlike, the toil-tried hero, win,  
 Forasmuch as he came in first : but Aias the ox must cheer.

Then laid he his hand on the horn of the meadow-roving steer, 780  
 Forth spewing the filth ; and he spake to the people a rueful jeer :

“ Out on it !—foiled were my feet of a Goddess, which heretofore  
 As a mother hath stood by Odysseus, and helpeth him evermore.”

So spake he, and all they laughed upon him in gleeful wise.  
 Now cometh Antilochus in the last, and he taketh his prize 785  
 Smiling, and spake mid the folk with laughter-litten eyes :

“ Known to you all is the thing that I say, 'O friends, that still  
 The Immortals favour the elders, their hands with honour they fill.  
 For Aias is but a little elder-born than I,  
 But Odysseus of earlier birth, of the men of a day gone by :

790

Yet his is a green old age, men say : hard task shall it be  
For any, save only Achilles, to strive with such as he."

So spake he, and glory he gave unto fleetfoot Peleides thereby.  
And with words of his mouth unto him Achilles made reply :

" Antilochus, not in vain shall thy praise be spoken : behold, 795  
Unto that thy prize will I add yet half a talent of gold."  
Then laid he the gift in his hands, and he took it joyful-souled.

Thereafter a long-shadowed spear did the son of Peleus bring,  
And a shield and a helmet withal, and he laid them amidst of the ring,  
Sarpedon's battle-gear, which Patroclus had torn from the dead. 800  
And he stood in the midst, and the word to the Argive men he said :

" For these call we upon twain, our mightiest, forth to stand  
Clad in their mail, and to grasp flesh-severing brass in hand,  
And facing each other before this throng to prove their might.  
And whichsoever of these the fair flesh first shall smite, 805  
Shall touch through the fence of the armour the body, and draw dark blood,  
This Thracian sword fair-gleaming with many a golden stud  
Will I give him, the falchion I won from Asteropaius in fight :  
And together the twain in possession shall share this harness bright ;  
And for them shall a goodly banquet within my pavilion be dight." 810

Then stepped Telamonian Aias the giant forth of the throng ;  
And to meet him the scion of Tydeus rose, Diomedes the strong.  
And a little aloof from the press they donned their war-array,  
Then into the midst of the ring they strode, full fain of the fray,  
With eyes grim-glaring, and wonder on all the Achaïans came, 815

And when man against man drew nigh to play that perilous game,  
Thrice to the onset they leapt, and thrice clashed they in the charge.  
Then Aias thrust with his lance at the shapely-rounded targe  
Of Tydeides, but reached not his flesh, for his corslet shielded him.  
But his foe Diomedes over his mighty buckler's rim 820  
Aye darted at Aias' neck the point of his glittering spear ;  
Wherefore for Aias' sake the Achaians were stricken with fear,  
And they bade them to cease, and together to share the warrior-gear.  
But the hero gave to Tydeides the mighty battle-brand ;  
With the scabbard he bare it to him, and the fair-cut baldric-brand. 825

Then rough from the smelting an iron bar did Peleides bring,  
Which of old the mighty strength of Eëtion wont to fling.  
But him in the battle did fleetfoot Achilles the godlike slay,  
And this with the rest of his wealth in his galleys he bare away.  
And he rose full-height, and aloud to the Argive men did he call : 830  
" Rise, ye which be fain to prove your prowess in this withal.  
Though far from the city the victor's goodly acres lie,  
This shall suffice for his need while five full years roll by :  
For not to the city his ploughman for lack of iron shall fare,  
Neither his shepherd : hereof shall he have enough and to spare." 835

Into the midst Polypoites the battle-bider strode,  
And arose the brawny strength of Leonteus like to a God ;  
Rose Aias Telamon's son and godlike Epeius with these.  
Then stood they arow, and the bar did Epeius the godlike seize, [840  
And he swung it and hurled : laughed all the Achaians for joy of his might.

Then did Leonteus scion of Arês speed its flight.

Thereafter the third great Aias, Telamon's offspring, hurled

From his brawny hand : far over the marks of the rest was it whirled.

But when Polypoites the battle-bider laid hold on the bar—

Even as a herdman is wont to fling his staff afar,

845

That whirling in air it flieth amidst of the kine to fall,

So far did his cast overleap the throng, and shouted they all.

Then did the comrades of Polypoites the stalwart arise,

And they bare to the hollow galleys away the prince's prize.

For the skill of the archers the hero appointed the dark iron then ;

850

And he laid ten twybills down for the guerdon, and axes ten.

And the mast of a galley dusky-prowed he reared up high

Far off on the sands, and a trembling dove therefrom did he tie

By the foot with a slender cord, and he bade them speed the flight

Of the arrow thereat :—" And whoso the trembling dove shall smite,

855

Let him take the twybills, and bear to his tent in guerdon for this.

And whoso shall hit the cord, but the very mark shall miss,—

For I count him the worser marksman,—the axes ten shall be his."

So spake he, and forth the might of Teucer the princely stood,

And Mêriones, Idomeneus' henchman, a warrior good.

860

And the lots they laid within a morion of brass, and they shook :

First leapt forth Teucer's lot, and straightway an arrow he took,

And he shot with his might : yet he vowed not in prayer to the Archer-king

Of the firstling lambs a hecatomb-sacrifice to bring ;

So the dove hath he missed, for Apollo begrudged it jealousy-stirred :

865



Yet hard by the foot hath he smitten the cord that tethered the bird.  
And the bitter-keen shaft leapt onward cleaving clear through the string.  
Then skyward darted the dove, but earthward fluttering  
Loose hung the cord : yet shouted the folk for the deed he had wrought.  
But hastily Mèriones from the hand of Teucer hath caught 870  
The bow ; but the shaft had he ready, yea, even as Teucer aimed.  
Forthright to Apollo the Smiter from Far he vowed, and named  
For the sacrifice of the firstling lambs a hecatomb fair.  
And beneath the clouds he beheld the dove high-soaring in air.  
'Twixt wing and wing he smote, as she swept wide-wheeling around, 875  
And the arrow passed clear through : swift-plunging again to the ground  
In front of the foot of Mèriones was it fixed : but now  
Lighted the dove on the mast of the ship of the dusky prow.  
Then drooped her neck ; her wings thick-feathered loosely hung,  
And the swift life fled from her limbs, and adown from the mast far flung 880  
She fell ; and the people the while in amazement gazed thereon.  
So Mèriones the twybills ten for his guerdon hath won ;  
And bearing the axes Teucer aback to the ships is gone.  
Then laid Peleides amidst of the ring a long-shadowed spear,  
And a caldron unsullied of flame, flower-starred, the worth of a steer. 885  
Then rose the heroes up that were cunning the javelin to speed.  
Rose Agamemnon the wide-dominioned, Atreus' seed ;  
And rose Idomeneus' valiant henchman Mèriones.  
Howbeit fleetfoot Achilles the godlike spake unto these :  
" O Atreus' son, well know we how far thou excellest the rest 890

In bodily might, and withal in the javelin-cast thou art best.  
Thou then this guerdon to bear to the hollow galleys receive,  
And the spear unto Mëriones the hero now let us give,  
If thou in thine heart peradventure consent : for thus I pray."

He spake, and the King of Men Agamemnon said him not nay.  
So the lance had Mëriones : but the guerdon passing fair  
The hero-king hath given Talthybius the herald to bear.

## BOOK XXIV.

*Of the ransom of Hector, and how they wailed o'er the Tamer of Horses.*

**S**O was the throng dispersed, and the warfolk scattered wide  
To their ships : there were some took thought for the meat of the eventide  
And refreshing of slumber sweet : but aye did Achilles weep  
As he thought on his dear-loved friend, nor did all-subduing sleep  
Lay hold upon him, but ever to this side and that side he tossed 5  
As he yearned for the manhood and gallant might of Patroclus the lost,  
And the brave deeds wrought, the afflictions endured, as together they clave  
The surges of battle, or breasted the troublous-tossing wave.  
As he called all this to remembrance his tears fell down like rain,  
As he lay one while on his side, and otherwhile again 10  
On his back, and anon on his face ; and then to his feet did he rise  
And wandered distraught by the strand of the sea, nor unmarked of his eyes  
Was the Dawn, as over the sea and his beaches she shone afar ;  
But when now and again he had yoked his fleetfoot steeds to the car,  
Then Hector behind the chariot-seat for the haling he bound, 15

And he dragged him thrice round dead Menoitides' grave-mound,  
And again in his tent would he rest : but for Hector, he hurled him to lie  
Outstretched on his face in the dust : but Apollo was ever thereby  
From foul scathe shielding his flesh ; for he looked with compassionate eye  
On the hero, dead though he was ; and with golden aegis he veiled 20  
His corse all round, that Achilles might rend him not as he haled.

Even so in his fury to Hector the godlike he did despite.  
But the bliss-throned Gods had pity of him, which beheld that sight ;  
And they cried on the Argus-slayer to steal him, the Watcher keen :  
And the thing pleased all the rest, but never Hêrê the Queen, 25  
Neither the Maid of the Flashing Eyes, nor the Sea-depths' Lord ;  
But they were as when Ilium the holy at first of their souls was abhorred,  
And Priam and Priam's people, for Alexander's sin,  
Who contemned the Goddesses twain when they stood his steading within,  
And commended her which gave him his lust's desire to win. 30  
But at last when the twelfth dawn after the slaying of Hector broke,  
Then in the midst of the Deathless Phoebus Apollo spoke :

“Cruel ye are, O Gods, destroyers !—did Hector ne'er  
Burn you the thighs of oxen and goats most perfect-fair ?  
Him now do ye nowise deign to deliver, a corpse though he be, 35  
To the end that his wife and his mother and child their belovèd may see,  
And Priam his sire, and the people : his corse would they speedily lay  
On the pyre for the flame to consume, and the death-rites due would they pay.  
But Achilles the fell, ye Gods, are ye fain to help and defend,  
Who hath neither a righteous heart nor a purpose framed to bend 40



In his breast : like a lion he is that on fierce wild thoughts doth brood,  
 When the spoiler, upstirred by his mighty strength and his aweless mood,  
 Goeth forth on the flocks of men to win him a banquet of blood.  
 Even so hath Achilles slain all pity : in him no shame  
 Is born—sooth, manifold blessing and bane have men of the same :— 45  
 Yea, I ween it shall hap to a man to lose yet a dearer one,  
 As a brother born of the selfsame mother, or even a son ;  
 Yet, when he hath poured out wailing and tears, he refraineth him then,  
 For a spirit strong to endure have the Fates bestowed upon men.  
 But he, though his vengeance the life of Hector the godlike hath ta'en, 50  
 To his chariot hath bound him, and round the tomb of his dear friend slain  
 He draggeth him : little profit or praise shall it win him, I wis !  
 Let him fear, be he never so mighty, our indignation for this,  
 For behold, in his fury he doeth despite to the senseless clay.”  
 But in wrath unto him did Hêrê the ivory-wristed say : 55  
 “Yea, even this word of thine, O Silverbow, should be true,  
 If Achilles and Hector had equal honour, ye Gods, of you.  
 But for Hector, a mortal he is ; at a woman's breast did he lie :  
 But Achilles sprang from the womb of a Goddess whom I, even I,  
 Fostered and nursed, and gave her to be a mortal's bride, 60  
 Unto Peleus, the man most dear unto them that for ever abide.  
 Ye Gods all came to the bridal, and thou cam'st even as they  
 With thy lyre to the feast, thou companion of sinners, faithless aye !”  
 Then Zeus the Cloudrack-gatherer answered to her, and spake :  
 “Hêrê, against the Gods into anger thou shalt not break : 65

For the twain shall not have honour alike : yet dearest of all  
 To the Gods was Hector, of them that dwelt within Ilium's wall,  
 Yea, also to me, for in gifts wherein my soul doth delight  
 Never he failed ; and aye on mine altar the banquet was dight  
 With libation and sacrifice-steam, for our honour is this and our right. 70  
 Yet will we none of the stealing of Hector the valiant away :  
 Unawares to Achilles it may not be compassed, for night and day  
 Goeth his mother beside her son continually.

But I would some God would summon hitherward Thetis to me,  
 For a word of weight would I speak unto her, that Achilles so 75  
 May from Priam receive due gifts, and for these let Hector go."

So spake he, and storm-footed Iris arose that message to bear,  
 And amidst of the space 'twixt Samos and Imbros' crags, even there  
 Into the dark sea leapt : sighed closing above her the mere.  
 Like a plummet of lead to abysses unfathomed she plunged down sheer, 80  
 Like the plummet that, riding the horn of an ox that hath roamed the lea,  
 Descendeth with death to the ravenous fosterlings of the sea.  
 And Thetis she found in a hollow grot, and on this side and that  
 Thronged were the Maids of the Sea, and herself in the midst of them sat  
 Wailing the doom of her peerless son, for she knew it full nigh, 85  
 That in fruitful Troy, far off from his fatherland-home, he should die.  
 Then to her side came Iris the Fleetfoot, and thus spake she :  
 " Rise, Thetis : the Lord of Unperishing Counsels calleth for thee."

And Thetis the Goddess, the Silver-footed, made reply :  
 " Why summoneth me that mighty God ?—ashamed am I 90

With the Deathless to mingle, who bear in mine heart an unending pain.  
I will go, for the word that proceedeth from him shall not be vain."

So did she speak, and a veil she took, that Goddess-queen,  
Dark-hued, yea, vesture blacker than that no eye hath seen.  
And she turned her to go, and before her windfoot Iris the fleet 95  
Led on, and the surge of the sea was cloven before their feet.  
So they went up the strand, and darting up to the heaven they soared ;  
And Kronos' Son far-seeing they found, and around their lord  
In a throng sat all the blessèd Gods that for ever abide ;  
And Athênê gave her place, and she sat by Allfather's side. 100  
And Hêrê gave to her hand a glorious golden cup  
With words of cheer ; and Thetis tasted, and yielded it up.  
And the Father of Gods and Men spake forth in their midst the word :  
" Thou hast come to Olympus, O Thetis, albeit sorrow-stirred  
With a grief that thou canst not forget in thine heart : I know it full well. 105  
Notwithstanding, for what cause hither I called thee, now will I tell.  
For nine days' space a strife of the Deathless hath clashed in mine halls  
Touching Hector's corse, and Achilles the razer of fortress-walls.  
And they bade the keen-eyed slayer of Argus to steal the dead.  
But I will that the glory of this shall abide on Achilles' head, 110  
Having respect to thy worship and friendship for days to be.  
Now haste to the host, and speak to thy son this word from me :  
Thou tell him, the Gods are angry, and I, above all the rest  
Of the Deathless, am wroth, because that with fury-frenzied breast  
By his beakèd galleys he holdeth Hector, and will not release ; 115

If perchance he will fear me, and send the body thence in peace.  
And Iris shall bear mine hest unto Priam the great-heart king  
To go to Achaia's ships for his dear son's ransoming,  
And gifts to Achilles, such as shall gladden his heart, shall he bring."

Then Thetis the Goddess, the Silver-footed, obeyed his behest ; 120  
And she turned her to go, and she darted adown from Olympus' crest,  
And she came to the tent of her son, and there that hero she found  
Groaning in vehement wise, and his loving comrades around  
Busied them swiftly the while, making ready the meal of the morn :  
In the tent lay a great sheep slain, of shaggy fleece unshorn. 125  
Then sat the Lady his mother beside him, exceeding near,  
And with kind love-lingering touch did she soothe him, and spake in his ear :

" My child, how long lamenting sore and grief-distraught  
Wilt thou eat thine heart away, and of food wilt take no thought,  
Nor yet of the couch?—It were good in the loving embrace to lie 130  
Of woman : not long shall I see thee in life, but now full nigh  
Beside thee is standing Death and the overmastering Doom.  
Give heed unto me ; from Zeus unto thee with a message I come.  
He saith that the Gods are angry, and he, above all the rest  
Of the Deathless, is wroth, because that with fury-frenzied breast 135  
By the beakèd galleys thou keepest Hector, releasing him not.  
Then yield thou up the corse when the ransom thereof shall be brought."

Then unto her made answer Achilles the fleetfoot, and said :  
" So be it : who bringeth the ransom, let him bear hence the dead,  
If indeed with purpose of heart this word the Olympian hath said." 140



In such wise mother and son mid the gathered host of the ships  
Communed together, and many a winged word leapt from their lips.  
But Kronos' seed sped Iris to sacred Ilium-town :

“ Haste, Iris the swift, from the home of Olympus darting adown,  
Unto Ilium bear mine hest, unto Priam the great-heart king, 145  
To go to Achaia's ships for his dear son's ransoming ;  
And gifts to Achilles, such as shall gladden his heart, shall he bring ;  
Alone, none other man of the Trojans may fare at his side.  
Let there follow him only a herald stricken in years, which shall guide  
The mules and the wain smooth-running, and bring moreover again 150  
To the city the body of him whom Achilles the godlike hath slain.  
And let not death overshadow his soul, neither any dismay ;  
Such a guide, the slayer of Argus, to him will we give for the way  
Who shall lead him, until to Achilles he set him nigh at hand.  
And it shall be, that when in the hero's pavilion his feet shall stand, 155  
Himself shall in no wise slay him, nor suffer another to smite,  
For that senseless he is not, nor heedless, as some sin-hardened wight.  
Nay, he will spare, and grace shall the suppliant find in his sight.”

So spake he, and Iris the Wind-foot bearing the message is gone.  
And she came unto Priam's palace, and found there crying and moan 160  
In the court ; and around their father bedewing their raiment with tears  
His sons sat : there in their midst was the old man stricken in years,  
In his mantle closely shrouded about : on his head hoar-grey  
And all adown his neck much litter of oxen lay,  
Which his hands had gathered the while he grovelled low on the ground. 165

And with wail of his daughters and wives of his sons the halls rang round,  
As they thought upon those, the many and valiant, that low in the dust  
Lay, whom the Argive hands through the gates of the grave had thrust.  
Then stood by Priam the messenger sent from Zeus, and she spake  
With voice low-murmuring : then did his limbs with trembling quake : 170  
    " Be of good cheer, O Dardanid Priam, and fear not thou ;  
For not with foreboding of evil am I come unto thee now,  
But with kindly intent : the messenger am I of Zeus unto thee,  
Who careth for thee with exceeding compassion, afar though he be.  
To ransom thine Hector the Lord of Olympus biddeth thee fare, 175  
And gifts to Achilles, such as shall gladden his heart, shalt thou bear ;  
Alone, none other man of the Trojans may fare at thy side :  
Let there follow thee only a herald stricken in years, who shall guide  
The mules and the wain smooth-running, and bring moreover again  
To the city the body of him whom Achilles the godlike hath slain. 180  
And let not death overshadow thy soul, neither any dismay ;  
Such a guide, the Slayer of Argus, to thee will we give for the way,  
Who shall lead thee until to Achilles he set thee nigh at hand.  
And it shall be, that when in the hero's pavilion thy feet shall stand,  
Himself shall in no wise slay thee, nor suffer another to smite, 185  
For that senseless he is not, nor heedless, as some sin-hardened wight ;  
Nay, he will spare, and grace shall the suppliant find in his sight."  
    Even so spake fleetfoot Iris, and lo, she was no more there.  
But the old man spake to his sons the light-running wain to prepare,  
Mule-drawn, and to bind the basket of wicker-work thereon. 190

But himself down into his chamber odorous-sweet hath gone,  
 High-raftered with cedar, whercin full many a jewel was stored ;  
 And he called his wife unto him, and to Hekabê spake the word :

“ Lady, from Zeus in Olympus to me hath a messenger sped  
 Bidding me go to the ships to ransom my dear son dead, 195  
 And to bear with me gifts which shall gladden the heart of Achilles the king.  
 Now tell me the thought of thine heart, how seemeth to thee this thing ?  
 For my mind and my spirit commandeth, and yearneth unsatisfied  
 Till I go to the galleys begirt by Achaia’s war-host wide.”

So did he speak ; but shrieked his wife, and she made reply : 200  
 “ Ah me, whither fled is thy wisdom, wherein in the days gone by  
 Thy renown amid alien men and the folk that thou rulest was known ?  
 How canst thou desire to fare to the galleys Achaian alone  
 To the sight of a man who hath laid full many and valiant low,  
 All sons of thine ?—of iron thine heart must be fashioned, I trow. 205  
 For if with his hands he shall grasp thee, for if with his eyes he shall see,  
 That ravin-ruthless and faithless man, he will pity not thee,  
 Neither hold thee in any respect :—now nay, but aloof weep we  
 As we sit in our halls. Ay, this did the overmastering doom  
 Spin with the threads of his birth when I bare him the son of my womb, 210  
 To glut swift-footed hounds, from his parents far apart,  
 In the power of a violent man—would God that I had but his heart  
 To grip it and rend with my teeth : then haply might vengeance be won  
 For my child, since in no wise playing the dastard slain was my son,  
 But defending the sons and the deep-bosomed daughters of Troy he stood, 215

No shadow of fear on his soul, no doubt in his blenchless mood."

Then unto her did the old man Priam the godlike say :

"Hold me not back, who am minded to go, nor become this day  
In mine halls as a bird ill-boding : my purpose thou shalt not sway.  
For if any of earth-born men had commanded me after this wise, 220  
Whether of prophets, or priests that divine by sacrifice,  
We had held us afar therefrom, and had deemed it a vision of lies.  
But now—for myself have heard a Goddess, and seen with mine eyes—  
I will go, neither vain shall her word be, and if my doom be said  
To die by the ships of the Argives brazen-corsleted, 225  
I consent : straightway let Achilles slay me, when once I have thrown  
Round Hector mine arms, and assuaged mine hunger for mourning and moan."

He spake, and the fair-wrought lids of the coffers uplifted he :  
Therefrom did he take twelve shawls exceeding fair to see,  
Twelve cloaks of single fold, and carpets two and ten, 230  
And goodly mantles as many, and twelve fair tunics of men.  
And he weighed ten talents of gold, and he bare from his treasure-store.  
Forth brought he flame-bright tripods twain, and caldrons four ;  
And a chalice that Thracians had given, a great possession and fair,  
When he went on an ambassage : not even this did the old man spare 235  
In his halls as he stood, for he longed in his spirit exceeding sore  
To ransom his dear-loved son : and he drave from his corridor  
The Trojans ; and wild from his lips 'gan the flood of reviling to pour :

"Begone, ye pests, ye reproaches ! What, have ye nowise at home  
Mourning enow of your own, that hither to vex me ye come ? 240



Do ye count it as naught that Zeus hath heaped on me woe upon woe,  
To lose that noblest child?—but ye, ye also shall know.

For lighter, far lighter, the toil for the host of Achaia shall be,

Now that mine Hector is dead, to destroy you : but as for me,

Or ever the horror of havoc and wrack in Ilium-town 245

Be seen of mine eyes, may I pass to the mansion of Hades adown."

He spake, and he scattered the men with his staff, and in haste did they fly  
From the face of that vehement sire : then loud to his sons did he cry.

Then did his chiding on Helenus, Paris, and Agathon fall,

On Antiphonus, Pammon, and battle-helper Polites withal. 250

On Deïphobus then, and Hippothoüs, cried he, on Dius the proud.

Unto all these nine that ancient shouted his hest aloud :

"Hasten, I tell ye, base children, my shames!—would God in the stead  
Of Hector by yon swift ships ye had all been laid with the dead !

Ah me all-wretched!—in all wide Troy the goodliest sons 255

I begat : not one is there left to me now of my glorious ones !

Mêstor the godlike, and Troïlus' chariot-chivalry,

And Hector—a god among men was my son, for he seemed not, he,

The child of a mortal man, but as one that of God's seed came.

These Arês destroyed : there abide with me naught but sons of shame, 260

Liars of light heels, champions they of the dancing-floor ;

Thieves, that for lambs and for kidlings grind the face of the poor !

Will ye heed not your father, to harness the wain with speed, and to lay

All these things thereupon, to the end we may forth on our way ?" [265

So spake he, and shrinking adread from their father's chiding, they brought

Forth of its place the smooth-running wain of the mules, new-wrought,  
Goodly to see, and the basket of wicker bound they above :  
And the yoke of the mule-team took they adown from the peg thereof ;  
'Twas of boxwood, set with a boss, and with guiding-rings dight fair :  
And forth with the yoke its band of cubits nine they bare, 270  
And meetly they laid it down on the goodly-polished pole,  
On the foot thereof, and the ring of it cast they over the thole ;  
And to right and to left of the boss three times did they overcast  
The band, and they lashed it down, and the tongue thereunder they passed.  
Then forth of the chamber they bare and they laid on the polished wain 275  
The ransom-price untold for the head of Hector slain.  
Then under the yoke the strong-hoofed harness-mules did they bring,  
Which the Mysians had given, a goodly gift, unto Priam the King.  
And under the chariot-yoke for Priam the horses they led  
Which the ancient himself at the crib with his own hands tended and fed. 280  
Even so in the stately palace the herald and Priam his lord  
Were putting their beasts to the yoke, with deep hearts wisdom-stored.  
But now unto these drew nigh Queen Hekabê heavy-souled  
In her right hand bearing the honey-sweet wine in a chalice of gold,  
To the end they might pour a libation or ever they fared on their way. 285  
And afront of the chariot she stood, and she spake, and thus did she say :  
" Take, pour unto Father Zeus : pray thou from the midst of the foe  
Home to return, forasmuch as thine heart doth constrain thee to go  
Unto the ships, albeit I would not have it so.  
Thou then to Kronion, who sitteth in gloom of the cloud-rack, cry, 290

To the Dweller on Ida, beneath whose eyes all Troy doth lie.  
 Ask of him the eagle, the messenger swift, which he loveth best  
 Above all fowl of the air, and whose strength is the mightiest,  
 To appear on thy right, that thou thyself with thine eyes mayst behold,  
 And mayst go to the Danaan ships by faith therein made bold. 295  
 But if far-seeing Zeus will vouchsafe thee his messenger not for a sign,  
 It is not I that will speed thee by any bidding of mine  
 To the ships of the Argives to fare, what though thou be never so fain."

And the old man Priam the godlike to her made answer again :  
 " Lady, I will not set at naught thy counsel herein. 300  
 Good is it to lift up hands unto Zeus, his compassion to win."

Then did the ancient command the stewardess-handmaid to pour  
 Pure water over his hands ; and the maid drew nigh, and she bore  
 The pitcher within her hands, and the water bright from the spring.  
 So when he had washen, the cup from his wife received the King. 305  
 Then prayed he, standing amidst of the court, and the wine he shed,  
 Looking up to the heavens the while, and he uttered his voice, and he said :

" Zeus, Father, most glorious and mighty, who rulest from Ida's height,  
 Vouchsafe me to win compassion and grace in Achilles' sight,  
 And send thou the eagle, the messenger swift, which thou lovest best 310  
 Of all the fowl of the air, and whose strength is the mightiest,  
 To appear on my right, that I myself with mine eyes may behold,  
 And may go to the Danaan ships, by faith therein made bold."

So praying he spake, and the Lord of Counsel hearkened his prayer,  
 And he sent forth his eagle, most perfect of all the fowl of the air, 315

The black-winged hunter ; the Dusky Erne men name it withal :  
 And even as wide as is fashioned the door of the high-built hall  
 Of a mighty man of wealth, with bolts full cunningly dight,  
 So wide was the spread of his shadowing wings, and lo, on their right  
 Over the city he darted ; and they beholding him come 320  
 Were glad, and the hearts of them all gat comfort and cheer therefrom.

Then hasted the ancient King, and he stepped to the chariot-floor,  
 And forth he drave from the porch and the echoing corridor.  
 In front of him fared the mule-team dragging the four-wheeled wain  
 Which Idaius the wise was driving : behind were the car-steeds twain 325  
 Which the old King hastily drave, as he plied the lash amain, [crowd,  
 Down the streets of the town, and his friends all followed, a grief-stricken  
 And as though to his death he were going they mourned him with wailing loud.  
 But when they had passed down Ilium's streets, and were come to the plain,  
 Then into the city his sons and his marriage-kin again 330  
 Went back : nor of far-seeing Zeus unmarked those lone ones fared  
 Forth to the plain, but he pitied the old man silver-haired ;  
 And straightway he looked on his dear son Hermes, and thus did he say :

“Hermes—for unto thee right dear is the task alway  
 To companion a man, and thou hearest whomso thou wilt in his need,— 335  
 Hie thee, and unto the hollow Achaian ships so lead  
 Priam, that none of the Danaan men may behold him, and none  
 May be ware of him, ere that he come to the presence of Peleus' son.”

Then Argus-slayer, the Guide-god, rendered obedience meet.  
 Straightway his beautiful sandals bound he beneath his feet, 340



Ambrosial, golden-gleaming, which wafted him over the main  
Swift as the blasts of the wind, and o'er earth's limitless plain.  
And the Wand of the Spells hath he ta'en, that lulleth to slumber deep  
Whomsoever he will, and anon it breaketh the bands of sleep.  
So the Argus-slayer, the strong, flew bearing the same in his hand, 345  
And swiftly he came unto Troy and to broad-flowing Hellespont's strand :  
And arrayed in the form of a youth of the princes he passed along,  
Whose chin hath the first soft down, whose life is lovely and young.

Now when they had driven by Ilus' huge grave-mound, those twain,  
On the bank of the river the mules and the chariot-team did they rein 350  
To drink, for the gloom dropped now on the earth from the brooding sky.  
Then was the herald ware of one that was drawing nigh,—  
Hermes it was,—and he murmured to Priam fearfully :

“ Bethink thee, O Dardanus' son ;—time is it for heedfulness now ;—  
I behold a man ; full soon will he cut us in pieces, I trow. 355  
Come then, let us flee away on the horses, or bow us in prayer  
Clasping his knees, if perchance he will have compassion and spare.”

But the old man's mind was confounded, and horror gat hold upon him,  
And the hair of his flesh stood up upon every bending limb ;  
And he stood all dazed. But the Helper-god himself drew near, 360  
And he grasped the old man's hand, and he questioned with words of cheer :

“ Whither, O father, thus the horses and mules dost thou guide  
Through the hush of the balmy night, when slumber all beside ?  
Of thy fury-breathing Achaian foes no fear hast thou,  
The ruthless men and lawless that wait so nigh to thee now ? 365

Yet if one of these, as thou bearest the fleeting dark night through  
 Treasures so many, should mark—what then art thou minded to do?  
 Not of the youths art thou; thy companion is stricken with eld:  
 If a man unchallenged shall set on you, how shall his fury be quelled?  
 Nay then, no hurt will I do thee: myself will be shield unto thee  
 From all else:—like to mine own dear father thou seemest to me.”

370

And the old man Priam the godlike to him spake answering:  
 “Yea, so in a manner it is, dear son, as thou sayest the thing.  
 Yet even o’er me some God hath outstretched his hand this day,  
 Who hath sent such a wayfarer forth to meet me here in the way,  
 Such a bringer of blessing, so wondrous stately and comely to see;  
 And prudent of spirit thou art: sooth, happy thy parents must be.”

375

Then unto him the Slayer of Argus, the Guide-god, spake:  
 “Yea, answer meet and right, old sire, herein dost thou make.  
 But come now, tell to me this, and the truth unswerving declare:—  
 Art thou anywhither sending thy treasures many and fair  
 Unto alien men, that these at the least may remain unto thee?  
 Or from Ilium the hallowed now at the last do all ye flee  
 Fear-stricken, so mighty a hero is dead, such a champion lost,  
 Thy son, for never he flinched from the fight with Achaia’s host.”

380

385

Then unto him did the old man Priam the godlike say:  
 “Now, mightiest, who art thou, and thy parents, who be they,  
 Who hast named me so truly and well the doom of mine hapless son?”

Unto him made answer the Argus-slayer, the Guide spake on:  
 “Thou art proving me, ancient, and askest of Hector the godlike wight.”

390

Him many a time and oft in the glory-wafting fight  
 With mine eyes have I seen ; yea too, when the rout of Achaians he chased  
 To the ships, and with keen-whetted brass their war-ranks aye did he waste.  
 There stood we and marvelled the while, for Achilles suffered us not  
 To fight, forasmuch as his wrath against Atreus' son was hot. 395  
 For his henchman I am ; in the selfsame gallant ship we came.  
 One of the Myrmidons am I, Polyktor my father they name ;  
 Mighty in wealth, but an old man like unto thee is he.  
 Six sons he had, and a seventh therewithal he begat, even me :  
 And we cast the lots, and it fell to me hither to fare oversea. 400  
 And now am I come from the plain to the ships, for at dawn of the day  
 The Achaians around the city will set the fight in array.  
 For they chafe to be sitting deedless : the princes Achaian no more  
 Avail to refrain the war-host battleward yearning sore."  
 Made answer to him the old man Priam the godlike one : 405  
 " If thou art the henchman indeed of Achilles Peleus' son,  
 I pray thee, let all the truth be uttered to me of thy lips.  
 Say : is my dear son lying yet in the midst of the ships,  
 Or to dogs hath Achilles cast him, a corse hewn limb from limb ? "  
 Answered the slayer of Argus, the Guide-god spake unto him : 410  
 " Old man, not yet on his body the dogs or the vultures have fed,  
 But still by the ship of Achilles lieth unchanged thy dead  
 Amidst of the tents, and the twelfth dawn now hath beheld him laid  
 Lifeless on earth, and yet is the flesh of him undecayed,  
 Neither feast on him worms, the devourers of warriors battle-slain. 415

Good sooth, but Achilles ruthlessly haleth him once and again  
Around his dead friend's barrow, whenso appeareth the light ;  
Yet he marreth him not : thou wouldst marvel thyself, shouldst thou come on  
How dewy-fresh he lieth, as washen from blood all around ; [the sight,  
He hath nowhere any pollution, and closed is every wound 420  
That was dealt unto him: there were many that stabbed his corse with the spear.  
With care so watchful still do the bliss-throned Gods stand near  
Though a corpse be thy son, for aye to their hearts was he passing dear."

So did he speak, and the ancient rejoiced, and he answered thereto :

" O son, it is verily good to render the gifts that be due 425  
To the Deathless, for never my son, if he e'er was a living wight,  
Forgat in his halls the Gods which dwell on Olympus' height.  
Wherefore on him have they thought, though compassed he be with the bands  
Of death. Now prithee receive this beautiful cup at mine hands,  
And save me, and help me forth on my way, if the high Gods speed, 430  
Until I shall come to the tent of Achilles Peleus' seed."

Unto him did the Argus-slayer, the Guide-god, answering say : [sway,  
" Thou dost prove me, old man, who am younger than thou, but thou shalt not  
Who biddest me take thy gifts, when Achilles thereof knoweth naught.  
Nay, him do I fear : mine heart hath shame of the very thought 435  
Of robbing my lord, lest mischief hereafter of this should grow.  
But even to Argos the famous with thee as thy guide would I go,  
Kindly companioning thee in the sea-swift ship, or by land :  
And no man for scorn of thine escort should lift up against thee his hand."

Leapt on the chariot of horses the Helper-god as he spake, 440



And swiftly the whip and the reins in his grasp of might did he take,  
 And into the horses and mule-team breathed he mettle stout.  
 So when they were come to the towers of the ships and the trench thereabout,  
 Even then were the watchmen preparing their meat of the eventide ;  
 But sleep on them all was shed of the Slayer of Argus, the Guide. 445  
 And straightway he opened the gates, and backward the bolts he shot,  
 And Priam and those fair gifts on the wain therethrough hath he brought.  
 But when to the dwelling of Peleus' son at the last they came,  
 High-built—the Myrmidon men for their king had fashioned the same,  
 Hewing them beams of the pine, and they thatched it overhead, 450  
 For they mowed the downy rush wherewithal was the mead overspread ;  
 And around it they reared for their king the fence of a great court-yard  
 Of stakes close-set : with a single bolt was the gate of it barred,  
 A pine-beam : home was it thrust by the strength of Achaians three,  
 And to shoot that huge bolt back must three heave mightily 455  
 Of the rest :—in the giant grasp of Achilles alone would it slide.  
 At the touch of the Helper leading the old King back did it glide ;  
 And for Peleus' son those glorious gifts therewithin did he bring ;  
 And he lighted down from the chariot to earth, and he spake to the King :  
 “ Old man, lo, I that have hitherward come am a deathless God, 460  
 Hermes : Allfather hath sent me to speed thee upon thy road.  
 But now will I hie me aback : to behold me shall nowise be given  
 To the eyes of Achilles ; for indignation should be in heaven,  
 If mortals should openly thus find grace with a Deathless One.  
 But thou, pass in, and clasp thou the knees of Peleus' son, 465

And beseech thou him by his father, his mother, the lovely-tressed,  
And his child, that thou mayest prevail to stir the heart in his breast."

So when he had ended the word, to Olympus speeding afar  
Hermes was gone, and Priam leapt to the earth from his car.  
There left he Idaius reining the horses and mules to stay 470  
Without ; but into the dwelling the old man passed straightway  
Where Achilles the Zeus-loved wont to sit ; and the hero there  
He found, but aloof were his comrades sitting : yet twain there were,  
The hero Automedon, Alkimus, scion of Arês' blood,  
Which waited on him : he had newly ceased from taking of food, 475  
Of meat and of drink, and yet beside him the table stood.  
And Priam had entered, and stood by the hero, or ever they wist.  
And he clasped in his hands the knees of Achilles, the hands he kissed,  
The terrible murderous hands which had slain him many a son.  
And as cometh a heavy curse on a man of whom murder was done 480  
In his own land, now in his flight to an alien folk hath he won,  
To the house of a wealthy man, and all in amaze look on ;  
So upon Priam the godlike Achilles stared amazed,  
And amazed were the rest withal, as each on his fellow they gazed.  
Then Priam made supplication to him, and his prayer he began : 485  
" Remember thy father, Achilles, thou godlike-glorious man :  
Old even as I, on the grievous threshold of eld doth he stand,  
And is haply oppressed of his neighbours which dwell on every hand :  
And when ruin and bane draweth nigh, he hath none to take his part.  
Notwithstanding, whenso he heareth that yet alive thou art 490

He rejoiceth his spirit within, and day by day doth he yearn  
 That yet he may see his belovèd son from Troyland return.  
 But I, I am utterly hapless, for mine were the goodliest sons  
 In all wide Troy, and none have I left of my glorious ones.  
 Fifty had I when came the Achaïans bringing their doom, 495  
 And of these nineteen were born unto me of the selfsame womb ;  
 And the others did concubines bear in mine halls ; and of many of these  
 The furious God of Battles hath palsy-stricken the knees.  
 But one was there left unto me, the shield of my city and folk,  
 And but now, as he fought for his land, didst thou deal him the swift death-  
 Even Hector : for his sake now to the galleys Achaïan I fare [stroke,  
 To redeem him out of thine hand, and a ransom untold I bear.  
 O have thou respect to the Gods, Achilles, have pity on me,  
 And remember thy father :—but I am more piteous yet than he,  
 And have dared what none beside of earth-born mortals hath done, 505  
 To draw to my lips the hand of the man that hath slain my son.”

Then yearning to weep for his sire in Achilles was stirred at his cry,  
 And he touched the old man's hand, and gently he put him by.  
 And these twain, calling to mind their belovèd, wept aloud,  
 For Hector the manslayer one, at Achilles' feet as he bowed, 510  
 But Achilles wept for his own dear father the while, and anon  
 For Patroclus, and echoed and swelled through all the dwelling their moan.  
 But when with the feast of mourning Achilles the godlike was filled,  
 And the yearning for tears that had shaken his breast and his limbs was stilled,  
 He leapt from his seat, and the ancient he raised by the hand straightway 515

Compassionating his hoar-grey head and his beard hoar-grey ;  
And he lifted his voice unto him, and the light-winged words spake he :

“ Ah hapless, manifold woe hast thou borne in the heart of thee !  
How didst thou dare to come to the galleys Achaian alone  
To the eyes of a man who hath slain full many a valiant one, 520  
All sons of thine ?—Of a surety an iron heart hast thou !  
But come, on the high-seat sit we down, and leave we now  
Our griefs in our bosoms to slumber awhile, how anguished soe'er,  
For in lamentation that chilleth the heart no profit is there.  
For thus for unhappy mortals the Gods have their life-threads spun, 525  
In affliction of spirit to live, but care themselves have none.  
For there stand two Urns of Doom on Zeus's palace-floor,  
With his gifts : with the evil the one, the other with good runneth o'er.  
For whomso the Thunder-triumphant hath mingled of these ere he give,  
Now upon evil he lighteth, and good things now doth receive. 530  
But to whomso he giveth of evil, him with a curse doth he brand,  
And him fell famine houndeth over the sea and land  
A vagabond, neither in honour with Gods nor with men doth he stand.  
In such wise to Peleus the Gods gave, even from his very birth,  
Glorious gifts, in that peerless he was above all men on earth 535  
In the bliss of his days, and in wealth, and the Myrmidons bowed to his sway ;  
And to him, though a mortal he was, a Goddess to wife gave they.  
Yet God with the shadow of evil darkened even his lot  
Herein, that issue of princely sons in his halls he had not.  
Yet one he begat of untimely doom—ah, never mine hand 540



Shall be prop to the eld-overborne, for afar from my fatherland  
In Troyland I sit, and give to thy children and thee no rest.  
Thou too, old man—we have heard that in days overpast thou wert blest.  
Through the lands that Lesbos to northward, abode of Makar, doth bound,  
And all 'twixt Phrygia to eastward and limitless Hellespont found, 545  
Of all men wert thou peerless, they say, old sire, for thy wealth and thy sons.  
But since this woe hath been brought upon thee by the Heavenly Ones,  
Ever around thy city is battle and murder and blood.  
Endure, nor with ceaseless lamenting over thy sorrows brood,  
For nothing shalt thou avail by thine anguish for that thy son, 550  
Nor shalt raise up thy dead, ere thyself to a darker goal shalt have won.”

But to him the old man Priam the godlike made reply :  
“ Nay, seat me not yet on a throne, Zeus-fostered, while Hector must lie  
Uncared for amidst of the tents, but release him with speed, that mine eyes  
May look yet again on my son, and receive thou the ransom-price, 555  
The treasures we bring thee : in these be thou blest, and of thee be there won  
A return to thy fatherland for the merciful deed thou hast done,  
To spare even me to live, and to look on the light of the sun.”  
But answered Achilles the fleetfoot with dark brows anger-bent :  
“ Provoke me no more, old man : it was even mine own intent 560  
To release to thee Hector : from Zeus hath a messenger come unto me,  
The mother that bare me, the child of the Ancient of the Sea.  
Yea, and I know thee, Priam, it doth not escape my ken  
That a God led thee to the sea-swift ships of Achaian men.  
No mortal would dare to come, were he never so stalwart-young, 565

To the host : he should 'scape not the eyes of the guards ; nor is any so strong  
As lightly to thrust from its place the massy bar of my door.

Wherefore enkindle thou my soul mid its grief no more,

Lest not even thee, old man, I spare my pavilion within,

Though a suppliant thou be, and against the commands of Zeus I sin." 570

So did he speak, and the old man feared, and he did as he said.

But Peleides forth of the house with the leap of a lion sped ;

Neither went he alone, but henchmen followed their lord, even twain ;

For with hero Automedon Alkimus fared : of his warrior-train

Chiefly Achilles honoured them next to Patroclus the dead. 575

Then from beneath the yoke the horses and mules they led ;

And they brought the herald within, the crier of that grey king,

And they caused him to sit on a seat : from the fair-polished wain did they bring

The priceless ransom for Hector's head that waited them there.

But two cloaks left they behind, and a tunic woven fair, 580

That in these he might shroud the dead ere he gave him, home to be borne.

And he summoned the handmaids to wash and anoint the life-forlorn,

When first they had borne it aloof, lest Priam should see his child,

And haply should rein not his wrath, when his heart grew anguish-wild

As he looked on his son, and his curse should enkindle Achilles' breast, 585

And the hero should strike him dead, and sin against Zeus's behest.

And so when the maids had anointed with oil that corse fresh-bathed,

In a fair-wrought mantle and tunic the body of Hector they swathed.

And Achilles himself uplifted and laid on the bier the slain, [590

And with him his companions upraised it, and laid on the fair-polished wain.

Then wailed he, and called on the name of the comrade held so dear :

“ Be thou not angered against me, Patroclus, if haply thou hear,  
Hear from thy dwelling in Hades, that godlike Hector of me  
Is released to his sire : no ransom unmeet for his dead gave he ;  
And hereof thy portion due will I render, beloved, to thee.”

595

So spake he, and back to his tent is Achilles the godlike gone ;  
And he sat him down again on the cunningly carven throne  
By the wall on the further side, and his speech to the King he addressed :

“ Released is thy son to thee, ancient, according to that thy request.  
On the bier is he lying : thyself shalt behold when the dawn springeth up, 600  
And bear him away : but let us bethink us now to sup.

For Niobê beautiful-tressed took thought for her food, even then  
When perished within her halls her children two and ten :  
Six daughters were hers, six sons withal in manhood's bloom.

To her sons did Apollo deal with his silver bow their doom

605

In his wrath : on her daughters Artemis arrow-triumphant wreaked  
Vengeance, because she had matched her with Lêtô the beautiful-cheeked.

For she said, ‘ She hath borne but twain, and children full many have I.’

And for this by the hands of the twain must all that multitude die.

Nine days in their death they lay, and to bury the dead was there none, 610

Forasmuch as the people to stones had been turned of Kronos' son.

On the tenth by the Heaven-abiders, the Gods, to the grave were they borne.

Even she took thought for her food, when with weeping her strength was  
And somewhere now amid crags of the desolate mountains afar, [outworn.

On Sipylus, where, men say, the Goddesses' couches are,

615

The beds of the Nymphs which dance around old Achelous' flood,  
There on her god-sent afflictions, stone though she be, doth she brood.  
Come then, and our spirits with food, O ancient of men, let us cheer :  
Then, when thou hast brought into Ilium him that ye count so dear,  
Weep as thou wilt,—yea, well may he cost thee many a tear.”

620

Then Achilles leapt to his feet, and a white-fleeced sheep he slew,  
And his comrades flayed it, and dealt with the carcase in order due,  
And deftly they carved the flesh, and they ran the long spits through,  
And heedfully roasted the meats, and the roast from the flames they withdrew.  
And Automedon took the bread, and he laid it in beautiful maunds  
On the board, but the flesh was dealt to his guests by Achilles' hands. 625  
So they put forth their hands to eat of the meats on the board that lay,  
But when they had put the desire of eating and drinking away,  
Then gazed on Achilles the Dardanid Priam, and marvelled to see  
How great and how goodly he was, for like to the Gods was he. 630  
And Achilles marvelled the while at Priam Dardanus' seed,  
As he gazed on his goodlihead, and hearkened his speech with heed.  
But when they were filled with delight of gazing and wondering,  
Then opened the first his lips the old man Priam the King :

“Zeus-fostered, grant me to lie down now, that the weary breast  
In solace of pleasant slumber at last may be lulled to rest. 635  
For these mine eyes have closed never yet mine eyelids beneath  
Since the hour when beneath thine hands my son was bereft of breath.  
But evermore was I groaning and brooding o'er sorrows untold,  
As low in the very dung of the garth of the court I rolled. 640



But now have I tasted of food, and have poured the flame-flushed wine  
Down my throat ; but nothing ere now hath passed these lips of mine.

Hè spake, and Achilles commanded his comrades and handmaids to bring  
And to set 'neath the corridor couches, fair rugs on the same to fling  
Of crimson grain, and with carpets thereover to strew each bed, 645  
And, to cover themselves withal, thick mantles above to spread.  
So forth of the hall with the torch in their hands the handmaids fared,  
And swiftly they plied their task, and the couches twain they prepared.  
Then something grim was his smile as Achilles the fleetfoot spoke :

“ Without shalt thou lie, dear ancient, lest one of Achaia's folk 650  
Come hither, some counsel-chieftain, which ever and anon  
For counsel sit by my side, as meet it is to be done.  
Now if any of these spied thee through the dark swift-fleeting night,  
He would tell it to Agamemnon the shepherd of folk forthright,  
And haply delay should befall of the rendering up of the dead. 655  
But come now, tell to me this, and let truth unswerving be said :  
Through how many days art thou minded the death-dues to Hector to pay,  
That myself so long may abide, and withhold the host from the fray.”

And the old man spake, and Priam the godlike answered thereto :  
“ If thou wilt that I render to Hector the godlike the death-rites due, 660  
Great grace shouldst thou show me, Achilles, if thou wouldst do this thing.  
Thou knowest that pent in the city we be : far it is to bring  
From the mountain the wood, and with fear do the hearts of the people fail.  
Nine days over him in our halls would we make lamentation and wail,  
On the tenth would we burn our dead, and his funeral-feast would we keep. 665

And on the eleventh the grave-mound over his bones would we heap :  
On the twelfth, if it must be so, again shall the war awake."

Then unto him fleet-footed Achilles the godlike spake :

"This boon shall be thine too, Priam the ancient, as thou dost require.  
So long will I stay the battle, according to this thy desire."

670

Then on the ancient king's right hand at the wrist he laid  
His hand, that with no misgiving of heart he might now be afraid.  
So there in the porch of the dwelling the herald and Priam his lord  
Laid them down to their rest, with deep hearts wisdom-stored.

And Achilles the while in the stately pavilion's inmost place

675

Slept, and Briseïs beside him, the maid of the lovely face.

Now the rest of the Gods and the car-borne heroes lay in sleep  
Through the livelong night, overborne by slumber sweet and deep.

But not over Hermes the Helper of Men did slumber fling

Its spell, but his soul ever pondered in what wise Priam the King

680

Forth of the galleys, unmarked of the trusty guards, should be sped.

Then over his head he stood, and he spake the word, and he said :

"Old man, thou dost dream not of peril, so peacefully sleepest thou still  
In the midst of thy foes, forasmuch as Achilles hath done thee no ill.

Now hast thou redeemed thee a dear dead son at a mighty price :

685

But to ransom a living father the same should be told down thrice

Of thy sons which be left behind, if thy coming to Atreus' son,

Agamemnon, be told, and of all the Achaians the thing should be known."

He spake, and the old man feared, and the herald in haste he awoke.

And for them did Hermes put the horses and mules to the yoke :

690

And himself drave fast through the war-host, neither did any man know.

But when they were come to the ford where the lovely waters flow

Of swirling Xanthus, the child of Zeus that abideth for aye,

Then Hermes fleeting to high Olympus vanished away ;

And lo, Dawn saffron-mantled was spreading o'er all earth far.

695

Then on to the city with wailing and groaning they drave the car

Of the steeds, and the mules were drawing the corpse, and none was ware

Of their coming, neither of men, nor of women girded fair,

Till Kassandra, lovely as Aphroditê the Golden, clomb

Unto Pergamus' height, and beheld her beloved father come

700

As he stood on the car, and the herald, the city's crier, she knew ;

And him she beheld who lay on the bier that the mule-team drew.

Thereat with a shriek that rang down all the burg cried she :

“ Haste, Trojans and daughters of Troy, and Hector so shall ye see,

If ever, as forth of the fight he returned, ye hailed him with joy ;

705

For a crown of rejoicing he was unto Troy and the people of Troy.”

So spake she, and suddenly void was the town ; there was left in her none,

Nor man, neither woman, for grief unendurable smote each one.

And hard by the gateway they met him, as onward the corpse he was bringing.

And foremost the wife of the dead and his mother, wildly flinging

710

Their bodies adown on the smooth-running wain, 'gan rend their hair,

Clasping his head, and weeping the throng stood round them there.

And now through the livelong day till the light of the sun had failed,

In front of the gates for Hector with shedding of tears had they wailed,

But the ancient King to the folk from the seat of the chariot spake :

715

"Make way for me now to pass with the mules : thereafter take  
Your hearts' desire of lamenting, when home I have borne my son."

Back fell they to right and to left at his word, and the wain passed on.  
So when they had brought their dead to the palace of far-famed pride,  
They laid him adown on a fretted couch, and therebeside 720  
Set chanters, upraisers of dirges : the song of sighing and groan  
Ever they raised and anon, and the women echoed their moan.  
And Andromachê ivory-wristed began in their ears the keen,  
Clasping Hector the manslayer's head her hands between :

"O husband, young from thy life hast thou perished, and left me lone 725  
A widow within thine halls, and naught but a babe is thy son  
Which was born to the hapless, to thee and to me ; and never, I trow,  
Shall he come unto manhood : ere then this city her crest shall bow  
Unto ruin ; for ho, thou hast perished, her watchman, who wont to guard  
Her walls, and keptest her wives and her little ones safe in ward. 730  
And lo, these soon shall be riding in hollow ships oversea,  
And I shall be of them ; and thou, my baby, shalt follow with me  
Unto where thou shalt drudge at unseemly tasks, at the hest of a lord  
Hard-hearted straining thy sinews : or one of Achaia's horde  
By the hand shall grasp thee, and hurl from a tower—ah piteous death!— 735  
In his fury, whose brother perchance mine Hector hath reft of breath,  
Or his father or son, seeing many and many an one of the foe  
'Neath the hands of mine Hector hath bitten the dust in his agony-throe.  
For gentle thy father was not in the battle bitter and grim,  
Wherefore the people through all the city be mourning for him ; 740



And unspeakable moan hast thou left to thy parents, and yearning pain,  
O Hector ; and bitterest anguish to me above all shall remain ;  
For never thou stretchedst thine hand from the bed of thy death unto me,  
Neither spakest to me one solemn word, that ceaselessly  
By night and by day with outpouring of tears I might think thereon." 745  
So spake she, weeping the while, and the women echoed her moan.

Then thrilled them the mother's shriek, and Hekabê raised the keen :  
"O Hector, dearest of all my sons to mine heart hast thou been !  
Verily dear to the Gods in the days of thy life wast thou,  
And even in the doom of death have they nowise forgotten thee now. 750  
For others Achilles sold into thralldom, sons of mine,  
Whomso captive he took, far over the harvestless brine,  
Unto Samos, and Imbros, and Lesbos becrested with underworld smoke.  
But when he had reft thy life with the spear's keen-cleaving stroke,  
Oft round the tomb of his friend and companion by thee laid low, 755  
Of Patroclus, he dragged thee :—yet not from the dead might he raise him so !  
Yet dewy-fresh in mine halls art thou lying, as one new-slain,  
Yea, like unto one that Apollo from life hath suddenly ta'en,  
Whom the Lord of the Silver Bow hath with painless shaft overthrown."  
So spake she, weeping the while, and kindled unending moan. 760

Then a third bowed over the dead, and the wail did Helen begin :  
"Hector, most dear to mine heart of all my marriage-kin—  
Of a truth Alexander the godlike is he that calleth me bride,  
My lord, who brought me to Troy—would God ere then I had died !  
For the twentieth year is this that now passeth over mine head 765

Since the day I departed thence, since the land of my fathers I fled :  
Yet never an evil word have I heard or spiteful from thee ;  
But if haply another within these halls upbraided me  
Of thy brothers, or sisters, or brothers' wives in their royal attire,  
Or thy mother,—for kind as a father was evermore thy sire,— 770  
Thy words, to appease and to hush them, prevailed my revilers among  
By the spell of thy gentle spirit, the power of thy gentle tongue.  
Wherefore heart-stricken I weep for mine hapless self with thee ;  
For in all broad Troy none other is left to be kind unto me,  
No friend : all shuddering turn from me, the accursed thing." 775  
So wailed she and wept, and the countless throng groaned answering.

Then spake in the midst of the people Priam the ancient King :  
" Bring wood to the city, ye Trojans, now, and in no man's breast  
Be there fear of a close-set ambush of Argives. Achilles' behest  
Was this, when in peace from the dark-hulled galleys he sent me home, 780  
That the foemen should vex us not, or ever the twelfth dawn come."

So did he speak, and the oxen unto the wains did they yoke,  
And the mules, and swiftly in front of the city gathered the folk.  
Nine days were they bringing the measureless wood from the mountain height :  
But at last, when the tenth dawn rose, to the nations revealing her light, 785  
Then bearing Hector the valiant forth with weeping they came,  
And the corpse on the height of the pyre laid they, and they kindled the flame.

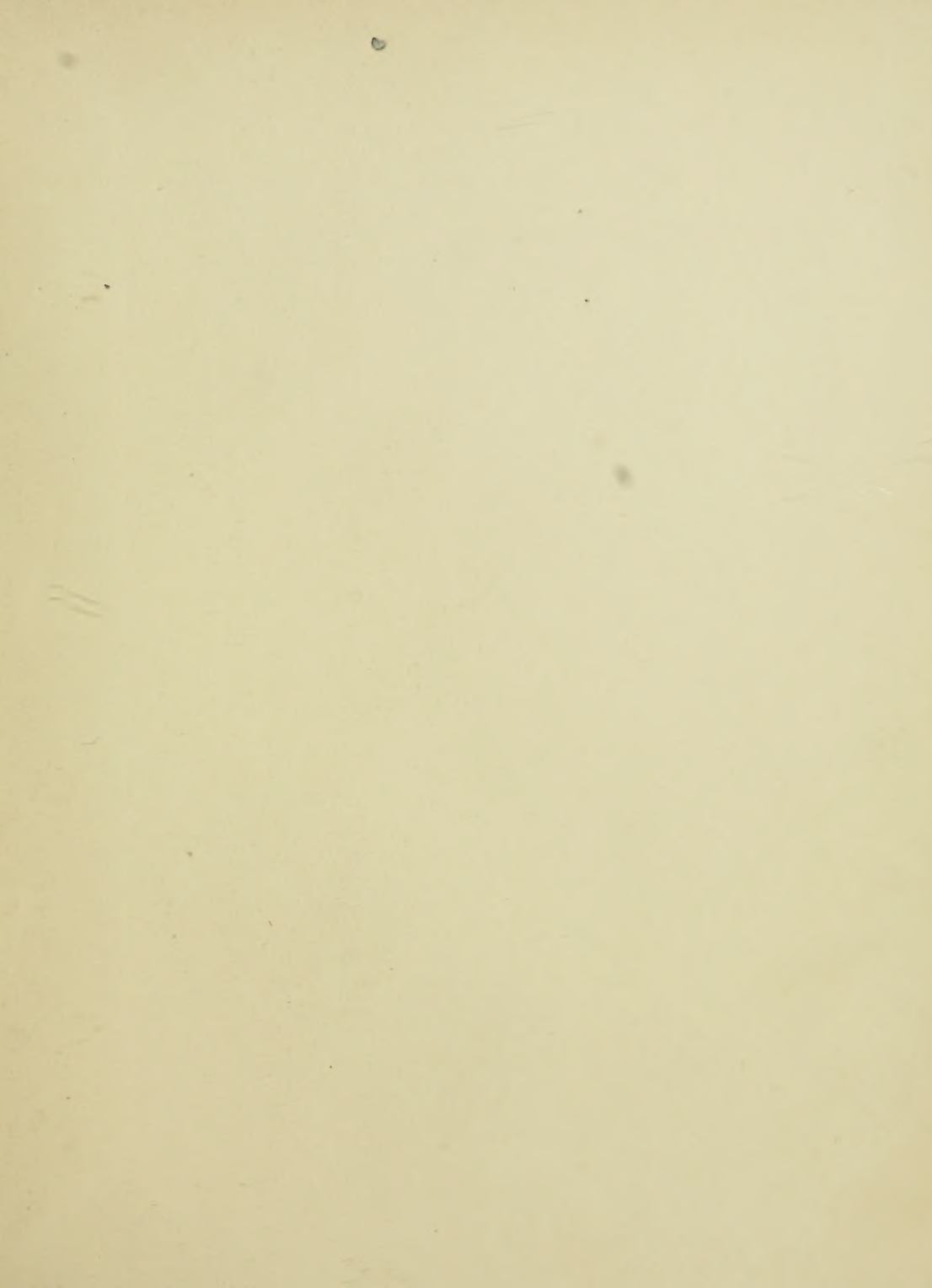
When flushed from her birth-bed of mist Dawn's fingers rosy-hued,  
Round glorious Hector's pyre assembled the multitude.  
So when they were gathered together, and thronged was all the place, 790

First with the wine flame-gleaming they quenched the pyre's red blaze  
All o'er, even whithersoever the might of the fire had reached.  
Thereafter his brethren and comrades gathered the bones flame-bleached  
Mourning, and down their cheeks the flood of their hot tears rolled ;  
And the bones of their hero they took, and laid in an urn of gold, 795  
And with soft robes swathed it about in many a crimson fold.  
Then swiftly they laid them to rest in a hollow grave, and thereon  
Piled they a cairn close-set with many a mighty stone.  
Then hastily heaped they the mound, while looked forth watchmen afar  
All round, lest ere the time the Achaians should rush to the war. 800  
So heaped they the mound, and they gat them aback, then gathered they  
To the feast for the dead, and dight was the glorious banquet-array  
In the halls of Priam, the great King fostered of Kronos' Seed.  
So did they bury him, Hector the Tamer of the Steed.

THE END.









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